

ERIC JOHNSON

PRESS KIT

immagista



*ERIC
JOHNSON*

imagista



Eric Johnson knows a thing or two about bad guys. But off screen the Canadian born actor is about the furthest thing from a villain. Imagista caught up with Eric shortly after the latest installment of the “Fifty Shades” franchise further jettisoned, the ever modest Canadian, into stardom. Eric describes himself as an incredibly boring (we doubt it) person when he’s not working. Lucky for Eric though, not-working isn’t part of his current career trajectory.

Photographer: PAYAM

Entertainment/Fashion Director: Christina Pacelli

Styling Assistants: Caroline Curtis and Katie Eason

Grooming: Sacha Breuer at Starworks Artists using Tom Ford for Men Skincare and Bumble & Bumble Haircare

First Assistant D.O.P: Braden Moran

Second Assistant: Matthew Chan

Third Assistant: Calvin Cheng

Production: GUNN + GUNN

Location: Level Furnished Living

INTERVIEW BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

STORY BY KATINA GOULAKOS

Imagista: Your Instagram bio reads: “I stand where directors tell me and say what writers write for me- professional puppet.” is that really how you see yourself?

Eric Johnson: It depends what project I am working on; I’m either a puppet or a prop sometimes, you just get moved around (Laughs). No actually, to be honest, I have been pretty damn lucky in terms of who I have

worked with especially with regards to how collaborative and open to ideas they have been. I actually feel creatively empowered so to speak. Twenty five years into this and I am still not bitter (laughs).

Imagista: How did you first get into acting?

Eric Johnson: I think the idea of having an audience was always something I enjoyed, whether I was at the

dinner table or the hockey rink. What really started it was a summer camp I did for two weeks when I was nine and the people who ran the summer camp did full year classes for young actors doing theater. I fell into it there and I did not love it all the time, there were things I did not like about it.

I hated doing the hard work and the practice, I just wanted to be on stage I think like most people do. You know I would stick it out and do my final performance at the end of the year and it would set me up for the next year because it was such a high. That theater company became my first job, they did family theater productions in Edmonton. The first show I did was *The Secret Garden* and we did a two week run of twenty something shows and it was an awesome experience being on stage in front of so many people, also there was the bonus of missing school. Working with adults and having to deliver at the same rate as an adult, having those kinds of demands was very fulfilling in so many ways. I could not imagine doing anything else, I feel so grateful to have found something I wanted to do early on and I was even more fortunate to be able to do it. Acting is a lot of asking permission and somewhat needing validation from those around you about what you do. That can be brutal I guess it all depends on how you take it. I think it is probably similar for

writers and painters and musicians or anything creatively. I do not think it is ever purely for oneself. You are doing it for some audience in some regards, however you may feel about them.

Imagista: I would love to talk about what you have going on recently. You just finished shooting another *Fifty Shades*, how many of the films are you in?



Eric Johnson: I am in the second and the third one.

Imagista: What has that experience been like both from an acting point of view and from an industry point of view?

Eric Johnson: I do not think there is any worry about being typecast. It is a little surreal to be part of something that has such a global awareness. Even going into the first movie, it has a massive global awareness. The book was so successful it was translated into I think fifty languages so it is really international. To find anything today that is that international is very rare, especially today.



I think audiences are still fragmented and everyone has their own niche. The thing that was so exciting for me was how excited the fan base was about these films and how welcoming they were on social media to me personally in regards to being brought into this world. I think under circumstances, something like that can be super overwhelming but it was anything but. For me, it was really fun to have people be excited that you are part of, then to also have them show up.

From an acting side of things, I really did not know what to expect going in. It is a big franchise and you do not know what the tone is going to be on set. This is not a little independent film, this is a very different machine. Honestly, I was really blown away by the experience and how creative it was and how much opportunity there was. James Foley was so welcoming to ideas. A lot of my stuff was with Dakota and I was constantly blown away by the nuance that she brought. I do not think she gets the credit she deserves, I think she did a remarkable job in this film. There are some things that she did that would be almost impossible to pull off and she does it with such humility. It was really fun to play and we got the opportunity to do some fun work, despite the fact that I am mostly being awful to her every time I see her. It was a really rewarding experience.

Imagista: Where was the movie shot?

Eric Johnson: It was shot in Vancouver which is where I used to live. I was working with a crew that I actually knew from years ago. So it was a really comfortable, familiar, warm environment. We had some great laughs and I genuinely looked forward to everyday that I went there. For me it has always been about

the process and the experience of doing what I am doing, not as much for the end result, which is arbitrary at the end of the day.

Imagista: You were also on *The Knick*, where you worked with an incredible cast. Can you talk a little bit about your experience on that show?

Eric Johnson: That was intense, it was very surprising. I kept waiting to be fired, it was a little surreal to be honest getting in there. To be working with a filmmaker like Steven Soderbergh was incredible. It was like a dream job, to even get one day on a film with him, then to be able to do twenty hours of television with him and his team. There were surreal elements to it and it was incredibly empowering.

For a man that does so much on set, he does so many things you would think there would be a level of micromanaging and it's the complete opposite. The expectation is for you to come in and do the best you can. I do not want to speak for all of us but everyone brought their best game and nobody wanted to be the weak link and nobody wanted to drop the ball. Everybody was pushing hard to bring their best, it was just an amazing environment to be part of.

Imagista: How do you feel playing such "horrible" people?

Eric Johnson: One of the things that I look at is the bad guy always feels like what they are doing is right, which is so true in life. People believe that their behavior is okay even when it is not. No one is inhuman, we are all very human and sometimes human behavior is horrible. For me it is just going that rabbit hole and horribleness of humanity. Bad guys usually get cool coats like a leather jacket, we do not get the girl though. We usually get to win for most of the movie and then we usually lose right at the end. It is fun I am not going to lie, being the bad guy is fun.

In *Fifty Shades*, being this horrible misogynist that abuses women was awful, those are not days on set that you really relish, I kind of scrub that from my brain with a bottle of wine. It is fun I guess with anything, I do not know why I always play bad guys, people look at my picture and think "Hey that guy looks like an asshole, let's bring him in!" One of the first jobs I ever had was being the neighborhood bully.

Imagista: What do you do when you are not working?

Eric Johnson: I realized I am an incredibly boring human being when I am not working. If I am not working on someone else's project then I am working on my own. The whole development world and getting things off the the ground, I have so much respect for people who get their ideas off the ground. I always think of Scorsese with *Gangs of New York* which took about twenty years to get that project made.



BAZAAR^{Harper's}

ERIC JOHNSON ON GOING 'FIFTY SHADES DARKER'

The actor opens up about getting beat up by Dakota Johnson and his most memorable experience with the fandom.



Eric Johnson's character in *Fifty Shades Darker* is the furthest thing from crush-worthy. As Anastasia Steele's creepy boss Jack Hyde, Johnson starts out with flirting before moving into predator mode, attacking her in his office when she refuses his advances. Ana escapes with an impressive knee to his groin and eventually takes his job, but *Fifty Shades* die-hards know Jack Hyde's storyline is only just beginning. He'll take on a much bigger—and much darker—role in 2018's *Fifty Shades Freed*.

In real life, Johnson is extremely affable and eager to talk about his evil turn—territory he's familiar with onscreen. On *The Knick*, he played an arrogant, hideously racist surgeon working under Clive Owen's character, while *Smallville* fans will recognize him as Clark Kent's romantic rival Whitney Fordman. "I don't know what it is about me that people say, 'This guy is an a-hole,' but it seems to work," Johnson says with a laugh. Below, the 37-year-old actor opens up about diving into the world of *Fifty Shades*, his experience inside the fandom and getting beat up by Dakota Johnson.

Johnson joined *Fifty Shades Darker* because of the franchise's scale—and he doesn't mind taking on the villainous roles.

"I've been working for 25 years and it's a wonderful opportunity to be part of something that is world-recognized. And of course, playing the bad guy is always a lot of fun. I have played my fair share of bad guys, or at least the nemesis. I've played horrible people and done horrible things and there were moments on *The Knick* where it was super uncomfortable—some of the things I had to do and say. Then [*Fifty Shades*], being horribly misogynistic [and] very violent towards women was something that I'd never really done before. It was so gross, it made me feel so disgusting at the end of the day. The things that I was saying and doing... I felt like I was constantly apologizing to Dakota for what I was doing. She was a total professional and we ended up being able to have some laughs during it, but I felt absolutely disgusting at the end of the day."

Playing the "bad guy" has taught him a lot about human nature.

"I think the weirdest part [of playing this kind of character is] getting in that head space and trying to understand how somebody could be like that in their life. If nothing else, acting has given me this window into parts of humanity [and] forced me to look at the world with a lot more compassion than I think I would've otherwise. [It's] understanding that nobody is evil and [these people] all think they're doing right, so how is it that somebody can have that mindset? How is it that somebody could do and say these things and feel totally okay about it? It's made me very empathetic to how people could end up in that position in their life, and it's not always a comfortable feeling. You can't just blame things on evil. Everyone's a human, so when people say that somebody's behaving 'inhuman,' it's not. It's very human—it's just not a very nice side of it."

"I felt like I was constantly apologizing to Dakota for what I was doing."

He wasn't prepared for such a warm welcome from the *Fifty Shades* fandom.

"I knew that it was a huge fan base [but] I didn't know they would be so welcoming to me. I think that's the thing that surprised me the most. You'd have to be living in a cave with no Internet to not have an idea of what *Fifty Shades of Grey* is. But I didn't know how welcoming and fun and passionate the fans would be [with] welcoming me into the fold. I'm constantly blown away by the excitement and friendliness and compliments that are coming from them for playing a pretty horrible character in this franchise, so for me that's just been lovely. As a performer, I'm happy if one person gets to see the work I do, but to have lots of people see it and appreciate it, it feels good.

"What I think amazed me the most was when we were shooting, there were people who had traveled from all over the world just to catch a glimpse of the shooting of these films. [For me], getting a brief chance to talk to people, whether they'd come from Europe or South America, it was amazing to know that they had traveled to Vancouver. If anybody's ever been around a film set, it's incredibly boring and it takes forever. It's two hours of waiting for thirty seconds of something happening and then it stops again. It's not nearly as exciting as it would appear to be, but that just shows the level of passion and excitement that the fans have for this franchise and for what Erica's [*Fifty Shades* author E. L. James] really accomplished with her book.

"At the premiere last Thursday in LA, they had done a masquerade ball for fans. It was an amazing venue and they wanted me to do this walk through—it was the first-ever 360-degree video broadcasting live on Periscope. I'm like, 'Yeah, how cool! How often do you get to do the world's first?' So I was walking through this party giving commentary to the camera about what was all around me and then at one point, I must've messed up somehow and the camera crashed. I turned around and there was this crowd of very excited women dressed to the nines in masks and smiling with their phones out. Next thing you know, I'm surrounded in this sort of selfie ball—just this swarm of masked girls all with their cameras out taking selfies. It was fun and a little surreal. For a moment it was like being Mick Jagger or something. They were just very happy, and what more do you want? You want happy fans. A lot better than them throwing their drinks at me."



"Everyone's a human, so when people say that somebody's behaving 'inhuman,' it's not. It's very human—it's just not a very nice side of it."

He always knew he wanted to be an actor.

"I always enjoyed performing, and my parents would say that I enjoyed that even as a kid, I was making faces before I could talk and telling jokes at the table. There was something about having an audience and making people laugh or smile and I've always enjoyed. I started in theater as a kid and did my first professional theater at 11 and loved it. I felt more comfortable being on stage and performing than I did in my own skin. It's a lot like being on a sports team. You all have your goals and you all have to work together to achieve a common goal, and when it works, it's very satisfying. It's one thing to do something on your own—I also like photography and playing music and cooking—but that's solo stuff. Getting to collaborate with other people and build something greater than the sum of your own skill is incredibly rewarding, and when it works well it's like magic. I think you can even see those results, too, in certain films or TV shows, where they all come together. It's something special beyond the vision of just one person. To me, that's the addicting side of it—getting to be a part of that team and trying to build everybody else up to create something better than what we started with."

His next project might just be his most interesting yet.

"I did a web series called *Junior* with filmmaker Zoe Cassavetes this summer, which is supposed to come out this February on a new short-form streaming platform called **Blackpills**. They went out to filmmakers to commission 10-minute episodes with a unique point of view. It's me, again, playing not a nice character. At first you think he's great, but then you learn that he might not be. It was the first time I realized you can do a web series like a film. It's hard to get your indie film financed, it's hard to get it released, it's hard to find your audiences; so having a story that breaks narratively into 10-minute chunks, and you do 10 of them—that's 100 minutes. That's a film. What an interesting new style to tell a story! I'm really excited for this as a new format and form going forward, because there's some really interesting voices out there as writers and filmmakers that may have been struggling to get their film made and a specific story told. Maybe this is a way that those interesting stories can find an audience and a global audience, too, and maybe it's a more stable revenue stream with better predictability, sort of how Netflix has taken over the indie film market. Netflix is commissioning these films that maybe a studio wouldn't touch. There's been a democratization of storytelling, where it used to be in the hands of a few. Really, there's almost no reason that you can't do something now and get it out there."

"This was also the first time I had been on a set with so many prominent female department heads—female cinematographer, director, producers—and it was awesome. In my 25-year career, I think I've worked with three female directors. That's an abhorrent number. That's just ridiculous. I've worked with plenty of mediocre to sh*tty middle-aged white guy directors and there's no reason why there couldn't be a different perspective or POV. Working with Zoe was a lot of fun and I really hope to be able to do more of that. I just hope for my daughter [that] in 10 years a movie made with a female director and cinematographer [won't] be a novelty. I want us to feel like we are [currently] completely outdated and archaic. Hopefully that happens at a rapid rate."



COSMOPOLITAN

8 Behind-the-Scenes Secrets From *Fifty Shades Darker*'s Eric Johnson

Anastasia Steele's boss tells all.



In *Fifty Shades Darker*, Ana joins Seattle Independent Press to begin her first official post-college job as assistant to editor Jack Hyde. He likes his coffee on time, is a perfectionist, and loves being in control (Sound familiar?). He also can't stop asking Ana out for after-work drinks (get the message, bro). In the film, he's played by Eric Johnson, whose résumé includes *Flash Gordon*, *Orphan Black*, and most recently *The Knick* with Clive Owen. For starters, Eric loves a good space pun. He also thinks the world is better when people are having better sex. "I come from a very sex-positive point of view where as long as everybody's safe and having fun, then that's great." Here, Eric shares what it was like to join the *Fifty Shades* family for the second and third films, and whether or not Jamie Dornan can really throw a football.

1. Despite the serious and dark (!) content of the script, there were a lot of laughs on set. "Dakota is an incredibly funny person. The first three weeks of the shoot were centered around my place of work in the movie, Seattle Independent Press offices. We got to hang out. It was great. We had a lot of fun those first few weeks."

2. The cast went out after work. "I missed a few nights where I know they went out. I got invited but was unable to attend. I'd fly in [to Vancouver] and shoot being a horrible human being and get on a plane and go home [to Toronto] and come back in two weeks and do it again. We shot over six months so it was a little drawn out. It was fun to waltz in and do horrible things and get to leave and not have to deal with the repercussions."

3. E. L. James provided some direction on where to take Jack. “We talked about the character a little bit. Obviously the script was pretty detailed. This is her brain. This is her world. As long as I kept her happy, we were in good shape. She seemed to be happy. She’s still talking to me.”

4. It’s really hard to play the asshole. “It doesn’t feel good to be a horrible, violent, misogynist person. I’d feel just awful. [Dakota] was so great to work with and always positive and thankfully didn’t take anything personally. But tapping into that creepy lecherous human being and escalating from there — it only gets worst. The things I really struggled with were the more violent things, just being violent toward women. It’s not something I’ve really done [on screen] before and that felt awful.”



5. Playing a villain meant a lot of showers after work. “[The films] got darker and more violent, and those were the things that [made me] feel dirty at the end of the day. I’d take a shower and wash all the grossness. I just felt like I had to constantly apologize to Dakota. We really see that in the third movie, just how far he’s willing to take it.”

6. Jamie Dornan’s got a talent for throwing pigskin. “He’s such a charming, lovely guy. The thing that really amazed me is for a guy who grew up in Ireland, he throws a football better than I do. [Editor’s note: *Eric is Canadian.*] He’d be warming up with his football and throwing it outside. Every once in a while, I’d get a throw in myself.”

7. A pair of space pants was constantly on set. “One of the best things that came out of shooting the movies was a pair of pants given to me by one of our hairstylists, Amber Hassa. It was a pair of space pants with the universe on them. They’re amazing. Peter Dinklage had done this spot on SNL with Gwen Stefani talking about his space pants. For whatever reason, Amber and I thought this was the funniest thing we had ever seen. She found a pair of space pants and gave them to me. They are one of my cherished items. They are a popular feature on my Snapchat. They’re one of my favorite things and they bring me so much joy every time I put them on. Rita Ora Snapchatted me in my space pants and I think she was a little appalled at my fashion choice. I very much enjoy them. You can’t put them on and not smile. It also makes other people smile. Here’s the good thing about them: If you’re wearing space pants, your booty is already out of this world. No matter what. They will be forever enshrined ... they will always be connected to *Fifty Shades* for me.”

8. Fans lurking on set were surprisingly well-behaved. “The thing that blew me away was people traveled from all over the world just to be there. We finished the shoot for both movies in Paris and there were over 1,000 people that had surrounded our location and were just so excited and so enthralled. That’s all for Jamie and Dakota; I was just there caught in the blast zone, so to speak.”

Bonus: When asked which SIP title he’d be most interested in reading, Eric chose *Your Delicious Threat*. “I imagine it’s a chef seeking revenge with poisoned pastry. I would definitely read that.”

People



WORD ASSOCIATION WITH ERIC JOHNSON

THE FORMER *FLASH GORDON* ACTOR, 37, PLAYS ANASTASIA STEELE'S MYSTERIOUS BOSS IN *FIFTY SHADES DARKER*

Guilty Pleasure

Pizza. It has to be ham and pineapple. My daughter [Calla, 9] loves it. I'll sneak spinach on there when she's not looking.



Funny

Women. The commentary on social media during the Women's March was not only inspiring, it was also hilarious.



Sports

Hockey. I played sports growing up, but I was pretty terrible. Now I'm a one-sport guy.

Dog

Ewww. In Canada, where I grew up, people didn't pick up after their dogs all winter. In the spring the entire city smelled like four months of dog crap.

Blindfold

Naughty. My wife [Adria Budd] had read the *50 Shades* books, so I was already aware. It's all about indulging those fantasies for an hour or two.

Hobby

Cooking. I love cooking with my daughter. We always have a good time.



—JULIE JORDAN

People

EXCLUSIVE

Fifty Shades Bad Boy Eric Johnson Says His Wife Is a Fan: 'It's All about Indulging Those Fantasies'

Warning: sexy spoilers ahead!

If *Fifty Shades Darker* actor Eric Johnson totally creeped you out as Ana's new boss Jack Hyde, you might take comfort in the fact that he also creeped himself out while playing the character — an unhinged, angry type who takes an unhealthy interest in Ana (Dakota Johnson).

"This one was weird for me," Johnson, 37, tells PEOPLE. "I've played bad guys and done horrible violent things, but it was something about the violence towards women that was really gross. It's messed up! At the end of the day I felt so gross about myself. Like, 'Ugh, I can't believe I said and did all those things!'"



In real-life the Edmonton, Alberta, native is, like many Canadians are known to be, genuinely nice, polite and happy — though he was no stranger to the kink of *Fifty Shades*. "My wife [writer-producer Adria Budd Johnson] had read the *Fifty Shades* books, so I was already aware," he tells PEOPLE in the new issue. "It's all about indulging those fantasies for an hour or two." Here are five things to know about the actor who's very good at playing bad.

1. He's always wanted to be an actor

"I loved doing the school plays in early elementary school, and when I was 9 I did a summer camp for two weeks and we did a little performance [at the end]," says Johnson of when the acting bug bit him. "Growing up in Canada, none of my family were performers or anything like that, but I was terrible at hockey so they needed something for me to do on Saturdays for me to get out of the house. I signed up for theater school on Saturdays and I'd go for four-and-a-half hours every Saturday morning and learn about theater. I did my first professional play at 11, and there was really nothing else I ever dreamed of doing. I felt so fortunate that I knew at the age of like 12, like this is all I want to do for the rest of my life, that's the only play, there's no backup plan. My mom wanted me to go to school and have a backup plan, I'm like 'No, this is the only plan.'"

2. Johnson's first big film role was playing a young Brad Pitt in *Legends of the Fall* — but they never met

"I had zero interaction with him because of course we were never onscreen together at the same time," he says of playing "Teen Tristan" in the film, which

revolves around the lives of three brothers and their father living in the Montana wilderness. “It was an amazing experience at 14 years old to be running around the Rocky Mountains and then working with a 1,400-lb. grizzly bear, it was pretty awesome. I loved it because I got to be at work, and working with a bunch of adults that was a really formative job for me. Hollywood didn’t seem so far away or intangible anymore. I remember at 12 years old I was writing goals down, like, ‘I want to be in an American movie before I’m 16,’ and then it happened at 14 and I had to come up with some new goals.”

3. He only plays a good guy on the Hallmark Channel

If you happen to catch re-airings of *Fir Crazy* or *Valentine Ever After* on the Hallmark Channel during their Christmas and Valentine’s Day movie marathons, you will see Johnson (who also plays a baddie on *The Knick*) in rare form — playing “good guys.”

“The best thing about doing those Hallmark movies is my dad loves them,” says Johnson. “My dad watches all of those Christmas movies, not just ones I’m in, he watches them all, so the first one I did, it was like my Christmas present to my dad. ‘Here you go, Dad, here’s something you can watch,’ so I’m very invested in trying to make it as good as possible because I want my dad to sit there and enjoy himself. The schedules on them are pretty crazy. We’re usually shooting them in the middle of summer and it’s boiling hot, but it’s really one of the only places where they hire me to play the good guy.”

4. He and his family make their own pizza — from scratch

Johnson’s favorite non-work activity is his movie-and-pizza nights with his family, wife Adria Budd and their daughter Calla, 9.

“Movies are a big thing in our house,” says Johnson. “Every Friday we do family pizza night and we make pizza from scratch and then we sit down and watch a movie.”

And how old will his daughter have to be before she sees her dad in *Darker*?

“She is definitely going to have to be a lot older,” he says. “And at that point she’ll be an adult and can make her own decisions.”

5. We haven’t seen the last of “murderly” Jack Hyde ...

For those who haven’t read the books, and are wondering what Johnson’s character Hyde is up to after that stalker-like final scene in *Darker* when he burns a hole through Christian Grey’s face in a photo, he’ll be baaaack! — in *Fifty Shades Freed*.

“That [scene] really sets up where we’re going for the next movie *Fifty Shades Freed*,” says Johnson. “Jack Hyde is a little unraveled now. You can expect a very obsessed man who will stop at nothing to exact his revenge on Christian Grey and you’ll find out why he’s so obsessed with Christian and Ana. There’s a history — it’s again pasts coming back to haunt people.”

Fifty Shades Darker is now playing in theaters.



Getting DARKER

“Thank God for ravenous fans, the internet, and my wife’s ability to retain information,” says Eric Johnson. The Edmonton native is talking about the lightning-fast prep he did before reporting to the Vancouver set of *Fifty Shades Darker* this past spring. It’s the second film in the continuing saga of Anastasia Steele (Dakota Johnson) and her kinky boyfriend Christian Grey (Jamie Dornan), and Eric Johnson had just gotten the role of editor Jack Hyde four days before. The third film — *Fifty Shades Freed*, in which Johnson also stars — was shot concurrently.

“There wasn’t time to read all the books,” says Johnson, who moved to Toronto to play detective Luke Callaghan on Global’s *Rookie Blue* six years ago and still calls the city home. “So I went to my wife. Fortunately, she had read all the books and she gave me the Coles Notes version of everything she could remember. And then I scanned through Wikipedia and there are these wonderful synopses, so I got the lay of the land.”

Like many of the characters Johnson has played, Hyde is not a good person. “Jack Hyde is chief commissioning editor at Seattle Independent Press, where Ana gets a job, and he’s very, very interested in this very interesting and beautiful young lady,” Johnson explains. Then he adds, “And he’s kind of a pervy boss.”

Johnson currently plays the conniving, racist surgeon Everett Gallinger on Steven Soderbergh’s award-winning 1900-set hospital drama, *The Knick*.

“You know, I’ve decided to embrace it for the most part,” he says of landing unlikable roles. “I try not to take it personally when a casting director says, ‘Who’s a guy we hate?’ And they look at my headshot and think, ‘This guy. Let’s hate this guy. He’s got that kind of face you want to punch.’”

The face is one thing, but what other body parts did Johnson have to put out there for this film franchise about bondage and sadomasochism? When his mother heard her son had landed this job she wondered too.

“She had people telling her before I told her, and I think she was a little nervous. So I was able to call my mom and say, ‘Mom, yes, those rumours are true, but I keep my pants on so don’t worry about it,’ says Johnson.

“I think she was a little relieved.” *MARNI WEISZ*

“I think she was a little relieved.” *MARNI WEISZ*

PHOTO BY TIM LEVES

**FIFTY SHADES
DARKER**
HITS THEATRES
FEBRUARY 10TH

Fifty Shades Darker

A quick chat with

ERIC JOHNSON

Playing alongside Dakota Johnson (Ana) and Jamie Dornan (Christian), this Canadian-born actor is set to heat things up as Ana's mysterious new boss in *Fifty Shades Darker* (in cinemas Feb. 9), the racy sequel to *Fifty Shades of Grey*. He takes WHO behind the scenes on the "sexy, psychological thriller."

1 Christian Grey has some competition! Johnson plays Jack Hyde, Ana's boss at Seattle Independent Publishing. "He's very much aware of who Ana's former boyfriend is," he says. "And there is a lot of competitiveness for Ana's attention." But Hyde, he warns, has some more sinister undertones: "After filming some scenes I felt like I needed to take a shower."

2 On the set, it wasn't all candles and champagne. Despite the sexy subject matter, Johnson says making the film was "just another day at the office." But "It was a very respectful cast and crew, with a well-timed joke thrown in every now and then." The biggest offender? "Dakota! She was incredibly funny, which I didn't expect."

3 There's less nudity... but more thrills. "It's still going to be titillating," explains Johnson, 37, "but this film has more of the thriller vibe with the characters' pasts coming back to haunt them."

4 It's the ultimate date night. Although Johnson concedes he'll probably "blush and giggle" when he sees the film with his

wife, artist Adria Budd, he maintains it's a date-night film—"It's beautiful people getting sexy onscreen." One viewer he'll be forever steering away: his 9-year-old daughter. "Hopefully she forgets I'm in it."



Johnson says he was able to "goof around" with co-star Dakota Johnson (filming in March).



"It's escapism and it's fantasy," says Johnson (in September), explaining the success of the franchise.



The actress debuted the Christian Lacroix mini in 2004...

... and wore the same dress to Paris Fashion Week on Jan. 21.

Frugal fashion

Kirsten Dunst rocks the same dress 13 years later

Eye of the BEHOLDER

One Direction's Liam Payne has revealed his tribute to his baby mama, Cheryl (formerly Cole), getting her eye inked on his arm. It is believed the 23-year-old's tatt is based on art from his 33-year-old girlfriend's first solo album, *3 Words*. If a tatt weren't enough, Payne's bandmate Niall Horan has spoken about the relationship, saying, "They are in love," and "It will be a lovely child."



Payne's new love tattoo made its debut on Jan. 28 in Los Angeles.



Payne and Cheryl are expected to welcome their first child shortly.

