



# JACOB ANDERSON *IS* RALEIGH RITCHIE



Actor, musician, writer, director, football fan...  
Two names, one killer CV

**Photography** Brian Daly  
**Styling** Fiona Downie  
**Words** Mark Williams



Jacob Anderson does a bit of everything. In *Game Of Thrones* he plays Grey Worm, leader of The Unsullied. Under the name Raleigh Ritchie, he makes emotionally raw modern soul music. At the moment, he's busy directing a short film about the sentimental drama of the FA Cup.

As today's FS shoot wrapped up, we sat down with Anderson to find out about each of his projects, and how he manages to juggle them.

The footage for his football film is entirely generated by fans. After FA Cup fixtures, supporters use the hashtag #CupStory to submit short clips that capture the rollercoaster ride of the competition. "The idea is to get a really genuine and true experience of the fans' match day: not just at the game, but watching it in a pub or listening on the radio."

Anderson basically acts as the editor, he sifts through the material and creates five minute stories which the FA will share through their social media channels. "The fans are making this film and I'm curating what they capture. It's their vision but I'm going to build a story through what they send in."

While the Premier League's biggest clubs may have recently shown an indifference to the tournament, it remains the biggest day in many players' and supporters' lives, the only opportunity for non-league clubs to pitch themselves against the European elite.

Anderson talks of Lincoln City's away tie against Arsenal; he received a clip of two Lincoln fans doing impressions of Jeff Stelling and Chris Kamara to camera. According to Anderson, the most entertaining footage is captured before and after the games.

"Yeah, it's interesting to see the difference in people before and after matches," he says. "It's been pleasantly surprising that if someone's team's lost, they aren't distraught; they're still so happy just to have made it that far and to see their team play a club like Arsenal in an amazing stadium that they never would have played in otherwise."

Anderson's directed music videos before, and says it's something he'd like to do more of in the future. But music videos involve narrative, storyboards, a pre-determined beginning, middle and end. Trying to apply this format to football is impossible; the outcome of games cannot be scripted, and reactions

cannot be choreographed, so he has to work without any knowledge of what the footage will look like.

"One of the things that's so exciting about this for me is that it's a really unique type of filmmaking," says Anderson. "It's kind of out of my hands; it's in the hands of the people sending me videos."

As channels like Arsenal Fan TV prove, emotionally vulnerable fans are capable of saying pretty wild things in the aftermath of a fixture. The FA has to keep things family friendly, so is it frustrating to have to censor fans' language when they're really wound up?

"I cannot encourage bad language because this film's for everyone," he says, laughing. "But if a clip's really good then I think I can work around it. We might just beep it out."

Before getting his acting break in *Game Of Thrones*, Anderson had been busy doing plenty of TV work. He was in a low-key but brilliantly written sitcom called *The Mimic* and the first series of *Broadchurch*. Cool shows, but nothing in comparison to the scale of the world's biggest ever fantasy drama.

He speaks with a real fondness about *The Mimic*, in which he played Steven, a young man who meets his father for the first time when he's 18. "It was filmed in Bristol [Anderson's home town] and it felt like we were left alone to make the show, it was like working with friends," he says. "I've got a real fondness for that show. I'm sad we didn't get to do a third series."

As a teenager, one of his first acting jobs was in an episode of *The Bill*, something British actors used to joke about being a rite of passage, along with *Casualty*. Does he think *The Bill* will be missed by new actors, who'll never have that chance to be 'Angry kid number 3'? (Although, according to IMDb, Anderson's character had the action hero name Clayton Fortune.)

"Yeah, it's sad that actors are not going to get to do *The Bill*," says Anderson. "But then I guess there'll be something else. For British actors, I guess *Game Of Thrones* has become a rite of passage!" He's referring to the fact that *GoT* has employed a staggering number of Brits during its six seasons so far, including *American Gods* star Ian McShane who was in one episode and jokingly described the show in an interview as "just tits and dragons".

Going from a small British sitcom to playing the leader of an army of eunuchs in one of the most popular TV shows ever made (in a matter of months) might have been a challenge for some, but Anderson seems to take everything in his stride.

"I'm sure some actors find it difficult to switch between things but it's all just pretending to me. I find it easy to switch from one type of pretending to another. It's kind of the same with switching between music and acting; a different way of having fun."

He also says his friends and family are keen to avoid finding out plot details for *Game Of Thrones*, so they don't even try to tap him for information. "They want to watch it spoiler free," says Anderson. "Even my girlfriend; sometimes I'm just talking to her anecdotally about work and about a character and she's like, 'no no no, why did you tell me that person was there, I don't want to know!'"

For Anderson, acting has only ever been half the game; music is just as big a part of what he's about. Under the name Raleigh Ritchie ("I see it as my ►



Previous page  
Jumper £275  
**King & Tuckfield**

Knit polo £129  
**King & Tuckfield;**  
Trousers £128 **All  
Saints**





Jacket £49.99 **Zara**; Knit top £221 **Neil Barrett at Flannels**; Trousers £435 **Gucci at Flannels**; Shoes £325 **Church's at Flannels**

Opposite  
T-shirt £19.99, and  
Short-sleeve shirt £29.99,  
both **Zara**









Jacket £1,095 **Saint Laurent**  
at **Flannels**; Trousers £420  
**Moncler Gamme Bleu** at  
**Flannels**; T-shirt £9.90 **Uniqlo**;  
Shoes £325 **Church's** at **Flannels**

band name” – more about that later) he released his debut album *You’re A Man Now, Boy* last year.

He’s now busy on his second record, and just before this magazine hits shelves he will have completed a five-date tour of America.

“I always thought the difficult second album thing was just an excuse, but it’s hard; it’s a cliché for a reason,” he says.

“You want to top that first album and reach your full potential but you put everything into the first one and you’re like, ‘what more potential have I got?’ But I’m really enjoying doing it. It’s stressful sometimes, but it’s fun.”

How does he mix the two jobs and write songs between filming in exotic locations for *Game Of Thrones*? “I like to create an office environment when I’m working on songs but I write ideas down every day, all day at any time,” says Anderson. “My phone is loaded with voice notes and memo notes to myself.”

*You’re A Man Now, Boy* is a deeply personal debut album about the realities of early adulthood, with songs that he finds difficult to hear again if he’s in a room with other people. But he describes releasing the album as “therapeutic” and talks about the positive feeling he gets when people tell him that one of his songs really connected with them.

“It’s a really nice thing when people say to you: ‘I get what you mean in that song, I understand your song and I feel like it understands me’.”

He has to hold some subjects back from public consumption though. “There are songs I’ve written that will never be released because I just can’t, they’re too personal,” says Anderson. “Sometimes it’s stuff that implicates other people and it’s not fair for me to do that. They don’t have an opportunity to defend themselves. It’s just one side of the story. There are usually three sides – my side, your side and the truth.”

He’s pretty hyped about the America tour too, delighted and genuinely surprised that the original New York gig sold out and prompted another four dates to be added.

“It’s something I’ve wanted to do for a really long time but we didn’t expect the New York show to sell as quickly as it did – that was a bit of a shock,” he says.

“The album didn’t even get a proper release in

America, it was just dumped on iTunes. People were annoyed. When I first released it, I was getting messages from the States asking: ‘How do we get it?’ So I kind of had to force the label to release it, which they did, luckily.”

Collaborators on *You’re A Man Now, Boy* include Stormzy – and Anderson made an appearance on the *Gang Signs & Prayer* track *Don’t Cry For Me*. The two artists go way back and over time their mutual respect has grown and grown.

“We worked together years ago, when I asked him to do a remix of one of my songs,” says Anderson. “We really got on and he told me he was a fan of my music so I checked him out and was like, ‘this guy’s amazing!’ His first EP, *Dreamers Disease* is pretty insane and brilliant and very different. We just met up and chatted about music and he asked me to be on his album and I asked him to be on mine and that was it. I’m so happy for him with everything that’s going on for him at the moment.”

One reason that Stormzy’s music has been so successful is his capacity to surprise people. He’s as likely to rap about the harsh realities of urban life as he is about liking Adele, drinking hot chocolate and watching a *Friends* box set.

“He’s a very surprising guy,” says Anderson. “I think to some people he’s got this reputation as a bad boy or whatever. And maybe he is in certain circles, I don’t know, but both things can be true. You can be two different people.”

Which leads us into how the media often likes to put people in a very specific box – something Anderson clearly feels very strongly about.

“This is a bigger discussion, but part of the problem with the London riots [in 2011] was that people weren’t seeing those kids as kids that watch *Friends* and play FIFA or do normal kid things,” he says.

“They were being represented as evil characters wearing hoods and robbing shops. I don’t condone what happened – it wasn’t about what it should have been about, it should have been a peaceful thing – but there was this nasty response where everyone started to dehumanise those involved; they weren’t just kids anymore, they were monsters, Britain’s troubled youth.

“I didn’t like how that was handled in the press. Looting is wrong and seeing your city on fire is not a pleasant thing but that doesn’t make the people involved bad.”

So finally, where did that name come from? Raleigh Ritchie was taken from film *The Royal Tenenbaums*, which was directed by one of his favourite filmmakers Wes Anderson (no relation). Bill Murray plays Raleigh St Clair and Luke Wilson plays Richie Tenenbaum; from these two characters, Raleigh Ritchie was born.

When I tell him that I once went to a Wes Anderson-themed birthday party dressed as the character Max Fischer from *Rushmore*, I land the real scoop: “I’ve never said this before but Max Fischer from *Rushmore* was one of my early drafts of what I might call myself. But I figured people would just think it’s my [real] name. At least with Raleigh Ritchie people might think it’s a little bit too quirky to be real.”

**“IT’S EASY TO SWITCH FROM ONE TYPE OF PRETENDING TO ANOTHER”**







Shirt £85 **AllSaints**;  
T-shirt £50 **Reiss**;  
Trousers £435  
**Gucci at Flannels**;  
Shoes £125 **GH Bass**

**Grooming:** Marco Testa  
using BY Frames  
**Fashion Assistant:**  
Marta Stella Brienza

