

Bluff City's Jeremy Taylor has what "It" takes

BY ELLA MILLER

Jeremy Ray Taylor of Bluff City, Tennessee, did not expect to become an actor. Things like meeting Harrison Ford or fighting a psychotic clown were unimaginable to him, but that changed forever when Taylor was launched into the world of the big screen.

Taylor was first discovered on one of his mother's business trips, which had nothing to do with acting in the slightest.

"Someone there liked my personality and just kind of threw me in there, into the acting business, and it worked out," Taylor said. "I just thought it was really fun and I love traveling. I love meeting people, so it just worked."

Now, Taylor loves acting, and has recently landed a role as Ben Hanscom in the motion picture, "It", based on Stephen King's best-selling novel. The movie is a major hit and has already grossed more than \$500 million worldwide.

Ben Hanscom is an outcast, constantly bullied and a bit of a nerd, so naturally, he has no trouble fitting in with the other members of the Losers Club, a group of young outcasts who must work together to stop "It", taking the form of Pennywise the dancing clown, from further terrorizing the people of Derry.

Taylor did not just jump right into such a major role without some acting experience.

"Actually, I'd been acting for five years before I got 'It', and I did a few things, but they all hit the cutting room floor," Taylor said. "I did 'Alvin and the Chipmunks', which I actually did get in, I did 'Ant Man' from Marvel. I got cut from that. I did '42: The Jackie Robinson Story', and I got cut from that. So, I did a few things here and there."

Taylor's audition for "It" was simpler than most. He sent in a tape, and the part was his. At

that point, Taylor was exploring multiple roles, but after learning more about Stephen King and his writing, Taylor knew he wanted to be Ben Hanscom.

Actually getting that part was an incredible event for Taylor.

"It was actually a day where we weren't really doing anything, and that definitely was a huge bump in that day and in my life," he said. "When I found out, I think I fell down a few times, got a little light headed, ran around my yard. It was a very very exciting experience, and we celebrated that night."

With the role accepted, Taylor had to start preparing for his part in "It". He listened to lots of 80s music, and even watched some 80s movies, but he didn't watch the original "It" mini-series or read the book.

"I kind of wanted to develop my own take on the character, but at the same time, stick to the description and to the older version of the character," Taylor said.

This is not the only reason Taylor didn't look into previous tellings of "It".

"Not to mention the fact that he wasn't allowed to read the book," Tracy Taylor, Jeremy's mother, said. "He was just 12 at the time, and Stephen King content was not allowed, so it was a big 'no'. He was not reading that."

Taylor traveled to Toronto for filming, where he spent three months as Ben Hanscom on set. The days were long, about ten hours of filming. Nevertheless, Taylor still had an amazing time, and the friends he made will stick with him for the rest of his life.

"Even when we were done with filming on set, we went back to [my friends'] place and had a sleepover and hung out, so it was like 24/7 with six other kids," Taylor said. "It was awesome."

Taylor thoroughly enjoyed

the filming process, but some scenes were more enjoyable than others.

"My favorite scenes to shoot were probably the ones with the bullies, and that sounds horrible, but they were so nice, so it was kind of like an emotional roller coaster with them," Taylor said. "Five seconds before the take, they were talking about how your day was, and then five seconds later, they were killing you, so it was just really fun."

Filming a movie can be exciting, but it can also be difficult. In "It", one of the scenes was filmed in a very small tunnel, which was pretty rough and uncomfortable. Every time Taylor wanted to get in or out of that tunnel, he would have to climb a rope to do so.

Obviously, education has to be a factor in the lives of young actors. A tutor is required, along with at least two to three hours of learning per day, so Taylor still had to go to school during the filming process.

"Luckily, this movie was filmed in the summer, so I only had school for about the last two weeks on the set, so it wasn't very bad," Taylor said. "Every single break that you got, you had to go to school, but it was good."

Taylor still hasn't read "It" or watched the 90s mini-series, but he has seen the finished movie.

"I have seen it twice now, three times if you're counting the time that I saw it in a rough cut, with no music or anything, so I have seen it twice in its entirety," Taylor said.

Despite playing the role of Ben Hanscom for three months, Taylor finds that he and his character don't have that much in common.

"I guess I would consider myself pretty smart," Taylor said. "I do have a lot of friends though, so I'm not too much like my character. I feel like it's easier to play a person that's totally



Scribe Photo/LAURA MURPHY

A CAREER ON THE RISE. Jeremy Taylor visits Sevier Middle and meets with students. Taylor's turn as Ben Hanscom in the movie "It" has not changed his love for Tennessee.

opposite from you, than Kevin James and Jack Black. someone that's just like you."

Travel is a large part of being an actor, so returning home can be a huge relief. "Usually, you don't get too much sleep doing these things, because events run late, and you don't get to sleep a lot," Taylor said. "I think the main thing I like to do when I get home is catch up on sleep, which I know is so boring, but it's true. Also, I like to eat at my favorite restaurants."

Leaving home for any period of time can be hard, and since a lot of traveling is required for acting, some actors just decide that it is easier to move to somewhere that is closer to the action. Taylor, however, intends to stay in Bluff City for now.

"I think the reason it's important to still be connected to your hometown is because that's where you first lived and that's where all your immediate friends that pushed you and helped you are, especially since it's such a small town, where everybody knows each other," Taylor said. "I think this is definitely one of the places that I should always keep remembering."

Taylor has hopes for the future of his acting career. He would love to play some kind of warlock at some point. People he'd like to work with include

"I think they're really proud of me and very excited because they get to travel with me a lot, too," he said. "Our whole family loves to travel, so I think they really enjoy it."

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STUDENT VIEWS ON NEWS

LOCAL

EASTMAN SUFFERS EXPLOSIVE ACCIDENT

There was no warning, no preparation, and definitely no stopping it. On October 4, 2017, Eastman suffered a catastrophic incident; a fire broke out near the chemical management sector, and though there were no casualties, the fire caused a chain of explosions.



Emily Stewart
7th Grade

Accidents happen; I just hope that everyone at Eastman at the time is now safe...

STATE

SENATOR AND PRESIDENT FEUD ON TWITTER

Since Donald Trump announced his run for president, Tennessee senator Bob Corker has been an ally. However, in recent week, Bob Corker and the president have turned on each other, which has now become a Twitter war.



Devon White
7th Grade

Once you work together, even if you get in arguments, you should not start this nonsense...

NATION

HURRICANES HIT TEXAS, FLORIDA, PUERTO RICO

It started off with hurricane Harvey hitting Texas on August 25; then hurricane Irma struck. Hurricane Irma hit the Bahamas and Florida on September 10. This hurricane has already killed 26 people, including 9 in Florida, and ripped buildings up easily. The category 5 storm was devastating.



Braelyn Sexton,
6th Grade

I thought that the hurricanes were terrible. My uncle was in Irma and he survived.

WORLD

ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11 BRINGS MEMORIAL SERVICES

Last month, it has been 16 years since the attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center in New York. The attackers on September 11, 2001 were suicide terrorist who used planes. About 3,000 people were killed. Memorial services were held all over the United States for the anniversary.



Callie Peters
6th Grade

I think it was a sad day. All those people didn't deserve to die.