

I HATE
MYSELF
AND WANT
TO DIE

*Scares, gimp masks and decapitation.
Just another day at the office for American
Horror Story's Evan Peters.*

Text by MARK JACOBS Photography by MAX FARAGO Styling by TOM GUINNESS



*Evan wears brown plaid cotton shirt by
MARC JACOBS. Vintage T-shirt stylist's own.
Stone washed denim jeans worn throughout
by LEVI'S.*

"I get called a weirdo sometimes. I don't feel that weird. I don't feel that different. I look at everybody else and I'm like 'you're a fucking weirdo, too. You like all of your shit. I like my shit.' Why does one have to be weird and one have to be normal?"

"I don't think I'm scary at all. It was kind of funny watching myself being scary. Because I'm not scary," says Evan Peters, the up-and-coming up-for-anything actor best known for his extreme roles on *American Horror Story*, the prestige television serial that treats social taboos as map points. For three seasons, Peters has excelled at playing against his offbeat boyishness by amping up his young Malcolm McDowell intensity, with results that fall somewhere between 'teen dream in strangler's gloves' and 'terrifying Michael Cera.' He most recently appeared in *American Horror Story: Coven* as Kyle Spencer, the good-natured university student who is decapitated and then reanimated with the body parts of his Kappa Lambda Gamma brothers as a temperamental Rocky Horror who beats his sexually abusive mother to death with a trophy.

Over a bold Chai tea with stevia, at a restaurant in Venice, California, Peters is lighthearted and dryly humorous, like a young Michael Shannon, with whom he should co-star in a successful, disturbing family sitcom. He wears black jeans, a well-worn T-shirt under a plaid flannel, and a necklace with a toy dinosaur pendant. He drives a 2004 Pontiac Vibe that he correctly describes as "vintage"; says that he just feels like growing his longish dyed blond hair into a ponytail; and has a red thumbs-up permanently inked onto the top of his right hand, that was traced over a nightclub door stamp. At one point, he raises his forearm to show off a temporary tattoo that he received the night before at the Castle Park family entertainment center in Sherman Oaks. "This is a Belle tattoo. It's not real," he explains playfully of a small portrait of the beautiful young heroine from the animated Disney film *Beauty and the Beast*. I tell him it's very pretty. "Thank you. She's gorgeous," he responds. I ask if Belle is his favorite Disney princess. "Well, I picked her out. There was also Jasmine, Ariel and Cinderella. My other buddies got those." What about Belle appeals to you? "She likes the Beast," Peters says.

This summer, Peters appears as the teenage

mutant speedster Quicksilver in *X-Men: Days of Future Past*, the sequel to 2011's *X-Men: First Class*, which has proven to be an eventful event movie. In October 2012, director Matthew Vaughn - who relaunched the franchise with much-needed style and a new cast of young, indie-credible actors - left the film to be replaced by original trilogy director Bryan Singer. As such, fans were already touched when Singer announced that he would retell "Days of Future Past," the seminal *X-Men* time-travel storyline from 1980, an ambitious plan that turned wild when he revealed that both franchises would merge into one. Cut to the 2013 San Diego Comic-Con where-by unthinkable feats of scheduling - the sprawling casts of the modern-day first series and the '60s-era prequel (that include expensive names like Jennifer Lawrence, Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellan, Michael Fassbender, and so on), convened with buzzy new additions like Peters to unhone popular culture. "You think to yourself, 'Wow, people really, really love this stuff.' And it makes you appreciate it more. It makes you work harder at it," he says about the experience.

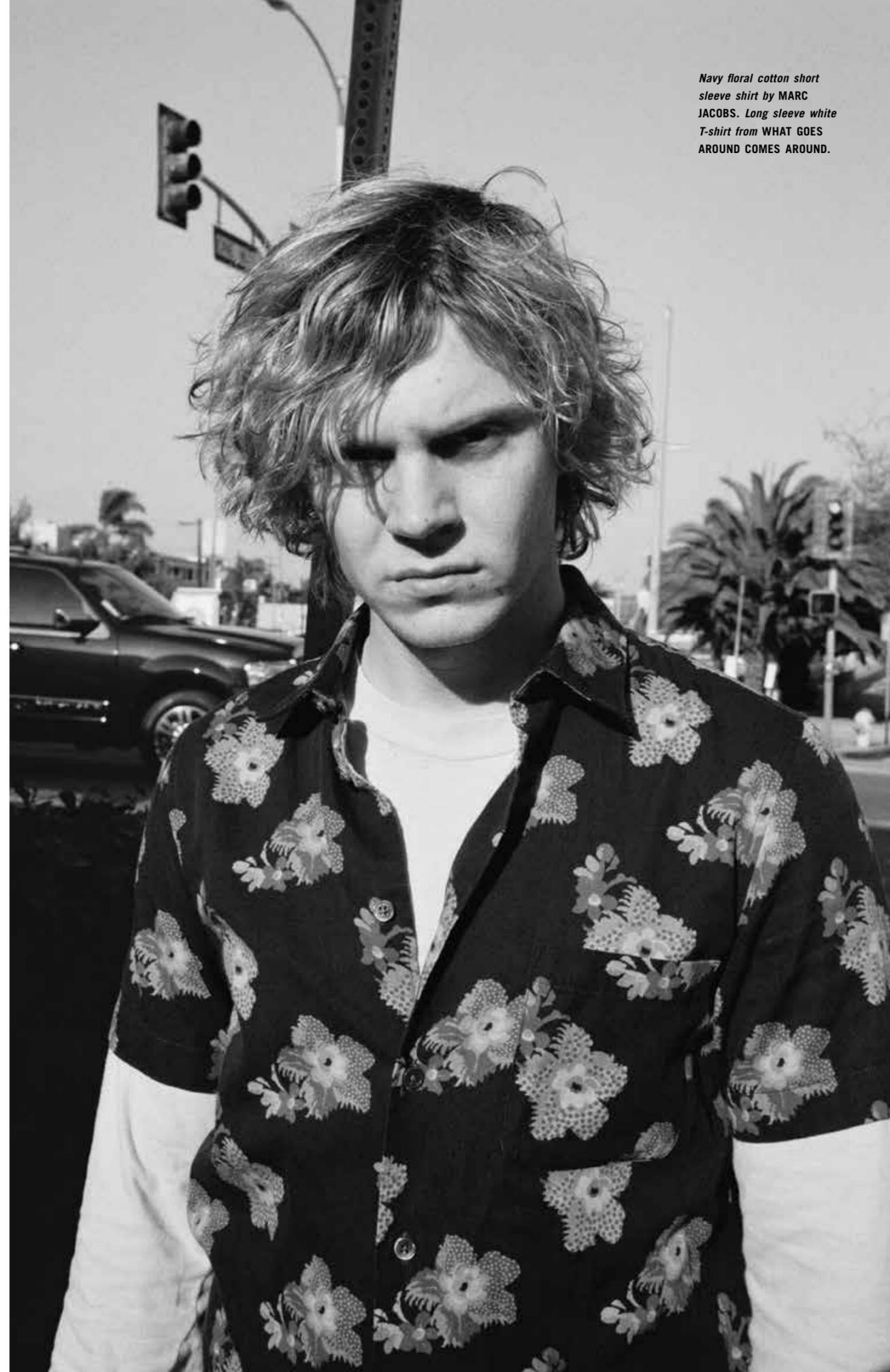
Peters' role in the film is crucial but concise. "It's a huge, huge opportunity but I always make sure to tell people it's just one scene. Easy, it's just one scene" Peters says, as if talking down a rearing horse. Quicksilver has already been the subject of film industry chatter regarding lawful usage of the character, who is both the son of Magneto and a colleague of the Avengers, making him fair game for inclusion in both *Days of Future Past* and the 2015 *Avengers* sequel (in which he will be played by Aaron Taylor-Johnson of *Kick-Ass*). An *Empire* magazine preview of Quicksilver's costume design was greeted with comparisons to *Kid Vid*, a '90s cartoon from the Burger King "Kids Club," and the news that Peters had been saddled with the Halle Berry 'rough wig' role. But his fan's enthusiasm for the project—in which desperate *X-Men* from a dystopian future try to stave off mutant genocide by altering the present day—is undimmed. "I think it's the best film of the

franchise yet," proclaims Peters. "It's pretty dire. It's a pretty epic situation. But there's definitely some humor in there. It's just badass, man."

Quicksilver is a departure for Peters in some ways if not others. Both *X-Men* and *Horror Story* are tight productions that take extensive precautions to protect story lines. Peters says that he did not receive the full script for *X-Men* until arriving at the Montreal location days before shooting. *Horror Story* pages are often delivered the night before a scene. The short lead time can demand an instinctual, almost improvisational acting process. "The minute we get the script, plans are cancelled, dinner is cancelled," he says about working on *Horror Story*. "Some of it you're like, 'Oh shit, I have to do that?' Screaming and crying, realizing that my whole body is pieced together and I'm not myself? I'll probably have to work on that."

Peters' owes his career to television. "I was watching a lot of TV and I kind of wanted to be on the TV and in movies. I love movies and TV," he says, and cites inspirations like Joaquin Phoenix, Heath Ledger, Christian Bale, George Clooney, Jim Carrey, Chris Farley, Tom Hanks in *Forrest Gump*, and the millennial teen comedies *Even Stevens* starring Shia LaBeouf and *So Little Time* with Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen. "That sort of stuff. I just really wanted to be a part of it and loved acting and performing." He moved to Los Angeles with his mother when he was 15 years old, and steadily won work in television, on shows including *Phil the Future* (2004) and *One Tree Hill* (2008), and in movies, like the independent film *Clipping Adam* (2004), his first big break, and later *Kick Ass* (2010). Being cast as Tate Langdon in the first season of *American Horror Story* in 2011 was his tipping point, playing a Skull Boy-faced high school shooter in a latex catsuit who rapes his girlfriend's mother to please a ghost. He has since become one of five main players to appear in all three seasons of the series, sterling company that includes Jessica Lange, Sarah Paulson, Lily Rabe and Frances Conroy.

Navy floral cotton short sleeve shirt by MARC JACOBS. Long sleeve white T-shirt from WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND.





Now the world gets to enjoy a lighter side of Peters, like when he appeared on a 2011 episode of the G4 network's *Attack of the Show* and blithely volunteered that he was working on a rap song called "I'll Tap That Fucking Ass." He laughs off a request to recite a verse. "I can't. That never materialized. I tried but it was too much pressure. It was just a concept. I was just trying new ideas," he says, and then volunteers a different musical direction. "It's called 'Natch Snatch.' Like all natural snatch. Big bush. Snatch. Cause it's nice. You know, 'Girl you've got that natch snatch.' It's another nice concept. Probably on the same album."

Peters laughs in agreement at the suggestion that he is a kook in the best sense of the word. "I get called a weirdo sometimes," he admits. "But it's like, I don't feel that weird. I don't feel that different. I look at everybody else and I'm like 'you're a fucking weirdo, too. You like all of your shit. I like my shit.' Why does one have to be weird and one have to be normal? It doesn't make any sense to me." Meanwhile, he seems to be successfully negotiating his public and private personas. "I try to be myself as much as I can but you obviously can't be who you are at home in your skivvies eating donuts. You can't be that," he explains, before confirming that guy exists, with his tongue-sort-of-in-cheek. "You bet he exists. Yeah, definitely. Watching *New Girl*. Crying."

But while Peters seems fairly comfortable in the public eye, fame no longer interests him. The development is not unrelated to his intense, closely-watched relationship with fiancée and two-time costar Emma Roberts (on *Coven* and in the 2013 independent *Adult World*). "When I was younger I was like, 'That would be awesome!' Now I don't particularly love it," he says. "Emma gets paparazzi a lot, and because I'm with her we get paparazzi, so it's kind of a weird thing that I don't love. But it's so small in the big picture of all of the positives that come with this job

that I can't really complain about it." He may be surprised by the attention he and Roberts receive, but he is hardly self-pitying. "Honestly, it's not that bad. If you don't set up a Google alert on yourself and go out searching for it then you're not going to see it. So I don't see it."

Roberts has already endured the Hollywood learning curve that Peters is now experiencing. "She gives me advice. Like cut your hair. She likes my hair to look nice," he says, and laughs. "She's been around and knows the ropes and how to play the game very well. And she has incredible social skills. She can talk to anyone and everyone loves talking to her. I'm not that good at that stuff so she kind of helps me out with that." I wonder what guidance she offers him. "You've just got to be personable and talk to people, even if you don't want to. Put on a happy face and buck up. Grow a pair of balls. Don't be a little wuss," Peters says, and laughs. "I mean she doesn't say that, but you know what I mean."

Next for Peters is *Lazarus*, opposite Olivia Wilde, Donald Glover and Mark Duplass, a 2015 feature from director David Gelb, known for the documentary *Jiro: Dreams of Sushi*. Peters describes the project, about a team of braniacs working magnanimously to reanimate the dead, as a "contained sci-fi horror thriller" as it mostly takes place in one laboratory setting. He plays the party animal scientist. Peters encouragingly sidesteps the question of his involvement in the next season of *American Horror Story*, to be set in 1950 and the present day, for which Jessica Lange is practicing a German accent. "I don't know what I'm allowed to say so I'm going to say no comment," he says.

"At the end of the day it is acting. You want to go with the biggest, weirdest, boldest shit and see if you can actually do it and go there," Peters concludes. "I'm very curious about everything. I feel like I don't know that much. I'm trying to learn it all and figure it all out." **MAN**

Left: Black leather Perfecto jacket by DIESEL BLACK GOLD. Vintage T-shirt stylist's own.

Right: Brown plaid cotton shirt by MARC JACOBS. Vintage T-shirt stylist's own. Cherry red leather boots by DR MARTENS.

**Hair RAMSELL MARTINEZ at STREETERS
Grooming AMY STROZZI
Photographic Assistance BENOIST LECHEVALLIER
Post Production LUTZ & SCHMITT NY**

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