

Twilight Lexicon Q&A with Edi Gathegi, cast as Laurent in the 2008 film adaptation of Twilight by Stephenie Meyer, March 10, 2008. Interview conducted by Cocoa, Twilight Lexicon staff writer. Part 1.

Lexicon - What made you want to become an actor?

Edi - *I guess I've always known from a young age that I was an entertainer and a performer, but I never really thought about it on a serious level until I happened into an acting class my junior year of college and fell in love with the craft. In high school I totally laughed at the "theater geeks", and end up being one professionally. Ironic? Yeah...*

Lexicon - Do you prefer theater, film, or Television? Why?

Edi - *I love them all for different reasons. Film is why I wanted to become an actor. It was just the coolest thing fathomable to me growing up. Theater is where my roots are, how I learned to act, and gives me the opportunity to embody a full three dimensional character from beginning to end in one night on a stage in front of a live audience. Television is where you can enter everyone's living room and become part of their family.*

Lexicon - Tell us a little about your very first audition ever?

Edi - *My first professional audition was for Spike Lee's "Inside Man" and I was so thrilled to be auditioning for a Spike Lee joint, him being one of the directors who's work I admired and dreamed of being a part of from an early age. It just seemed so fitting, that I even wrote him a letter telling him how grateful I was for the opportunity and how getting the part would only be icing on the audition opportunity cake. And guess what?! He gave me the part! A few weeks later I was cut from the film due to union contract issues, but I booked my second professional audition so I wasn't too heart broken :-). I still would love to work with Mr. Lee.*

Lexicon - What type/s of music do you listen to? Do you have a favorite song or group?

Edi - *My taste for music comes in waves. Right now I'm really into 80's music. I got Lionel Ritchie on my ipod. I find myself busting a verse from Billy Ocean's "Caribbean Queen" at least once every hour. Songs get stuck in my head very easily. Just now, I started singing "Owner of a Lonely Heart"! But I like a lot of different types of music and different artists. I grew up on R&B and Hip-Hop, but my tastes have expanded to include other music. I always say, a talented artist can make me appreciate any type of music. And Canadian pianist Glen Gould and his Golberg Variations is an example of just that. Such technical proficiency. Such*

beauty in his notes that makes you think and feel. If music makes me feel, it has served its purpose.

Lexicon - What is the funniest thing to ever happen to you on set?

Edi - *I'm usually the one playing pranks on the cast. For this film, I have this valley girl character named Kelly and she is an obsessed fan of Jackson Rathbone's and I call his hotel room and profess my love. Yeah... just plain silliness.*

Lexicon - What do you look for in a role?

Edi - *Is the role challenging? Is it different than anything I've ever done? Is there humor in it? Will it be fun to play? Will it show another side of me? All of these things help serve my interest in the role. The infrequency of work in this business sometimes makes you sacrifice some of the things you need in a role in order to take the role on. In other words the goal is to be at a place in your career where you can turn down roles that don't excite you because you don't need the money. And as I continue to grow within this industry, I look for characters with gravity and accidental moments of humor.*

Lexicon - What character have you portrayed in the past that was the furthest from your personality? What attracted you to that role?

Edi - *I haven't played a character on film or television yet that IS close to my personality. I'm goofy. Class clown. But the furthest from who I am would be, on the one extreme; the cold blooded psychopathic drug lord Haitian pimp Cheese, and on the other spectrum; the super religious conservative brilliant single father doctor Jeffery Cole. But I'm also VERY far from a slightly French accented vampire :-)*

Lexicon - What about the part of Laurent attracted you to the film?

Edi - *One word. Vampire. My dirty little secret is that I have always wanted to play a vampire but I have never really been attracted to Vampire films. But the story of Twilight is more of a romance set in a world where vampires exist (many would argue that would be THIS world). Stephenie Meyer did a wonderful job defining this world and making it accessible and intriguing and the story is so truthful, kind, and compelling. I wanted to be a part of THIS vampire story.*

Lexicon - Have you ever worked with any other members of the Twilight cast? And who are you most looking forward to working with?

Edi - *Working with everyone on this particular film is a first. I was excited to*

meet everyone. I love working and first day of work is like the first day of school. Nerves and excitement. But it's always a blast. I love everyone. Facinelli and I hang pretty tight.

Lexicon - What part of the film are you most looking forward to filming?

Edi - *Actually we just filmed the part of the film I was thrilled about filming last Friday. It's our (the nomadic vampires)entrance to the baseball field from the forest. I believe it's going to be pretty sick. We'll see, but I am told it came off kinda cool.*

Lexicon - Have you read the book? If not, are you planning to? And if so, do you have a favorite part or character?

Edi - *Yes, I've read the book. It was the first thing I did when I found out they wanted me to do the part. I love my role. It's combination of dangerous and gentle. A fun combo to play with. My favorite combo. But I also love bad bad, which is James. That role is gonna be fun for Cam to play and he's doing great. And of course the good, and that's Edward. But he's got a little fire in him as well as he should, he is after all, a preditorial animal. I love the part of the story when Bella comes to the mind-boggling impossible realization that Edward is a vampire. And she loves him. We are so rooting for her.*

Lexicon - Tell us about the Twilight audition process?

Edi - *Because I auditioned when no script was available, and I had no idea what Twilight was. I laughed at the sides (audition material) because there were lines like "...the humans..." and "...hunting range..." I was like... "What is this a vampire movie!?". So I went in the room and met Catherine. Half way through the audition I was having so much fun I said a silent prayer that the story be good because this director was so cool and I wanted to work with her. Then based on some of her direction to me in that room I asked Catherine if I was the first Laurent to audition (this was last November) and she said "Yes". I sighed and she asked "What's wrong?". I replied, "I wanted to be the last... elbow elbow wink wink". And she smiled, gave me the once over, and said, "You never know..." And the fact is, you never do know! Anything is possible. Here I am four months later. Absolutely thrilling.*

Lexicon - This will be your first fantasy/horror movie. What drew you to this new genre?

Edi - *This is my first fantasy. I think most people at some point or another have imagined themselves with super human powers. While "vampire" wasn't my immediate thought, (I was more along the idea of some sort of X-Man) I*

welcomed any opportunity to fulfill that fantasy. And it just so happens that this is a great series. And I am happy to be playing an interesting vamp.

Lexicon - How did you conquer the accent in your role as Haitian cabbie in Crank? Was it difficult?

Edi - *It's a funny story actually. I auditioned for Efen Ramirez's role as the cross dressing best friend of Jason Statham's lead character, but the director's (there were two of them) already had Efen in mind, and he was coming off of the momentum of "Napoleon Dynamite". I couldn't compete with that. But apparently they wanted me in the film in some capacity so they offered me the role of a Haitian cabbie. I told my manager that I had never done that accent and that maybe they wanted to at least hear me do it before they OFFER me a role without an audition. My manager basically told me not to be ridiculous and that I had training as an actor and could learn it and to accept the role. And I did just that! And to prep, I called up my Haitian friend and underwent a week or so of coaching.*

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