

Adam Nagaitis began his career training at RADA, where he was awarded the prestigious Carlton Hobbs Award for BBC Radio Drama before making his film debut with Jack O'Connell and Sean Harris in the BIFA-winning and BAFTA nominated '71, a thriller about a young British soldier who is accidentally abandoned by his unit following a riot on the deadly streets of Belfast.

Currently, Adam can be seen in a key role in Jimmy McGovern's latest seven part series BANISHED for BBC TWO.

The Version had an exclusive chat with Adam to find out more about his latest role.

You were born in the UK but studied acting in New York. What was that experience like?

I moved to New York when I was 19, so it was pretty overwhelming. For the first couple of weeks I lived in a dodgy hotel. I made the morning walk from 34th street to my acting school on 27th street and strayed no further. As time went on I grew braver and started taking trains and buses left right and centre, even the occasional ferry. I discovered all the boroughs, thanks to my class mates, and lived in almost all of them. Before long I was a local, and years passed before I even considered coming back to the UK.

I was actually lucky enough to study at two drama schools. Initially I studied at the Stella Adler Studio in New York, but then went on to RADA. Both schools surrounded me with people much more talented than I was, not to mention some of the best teachers in the world. I guess the best way to learn is to surround yourself with people who are better at what you do and trust that it will rub off. I couldn't really have asked for a better education.

You appeared in The Inbetweeners. How did you find filming that?

The entire experience was fantastic. I remember the script was kept 'classified top secret' so I only knew my character's one scene and had no idea how it related to the rest of the story. That was exciting in itself. I remember getting a phone call from the 2nd AD the day before shooting. He said "hi this is such and such from

the long goodbye"...I said "what the hell is the long goodbye?" he responded.... "The 'long goodbye'! (long awkward pause) The Inbetweeners movie"... "Oh !" I said..."The 'long goodbye'...of course.. how are you?" It was code you see.

On set it was like having my own private 'inbetweeners' show. What doesn't make it to the screen is just as hilarious as what does. Those guys are very talented.

Banished received huge viewing figures last night, how does that feel?

I'm so proud of 'Banished' and so glad that people enjoyed it. I recently watched an episode of Gogglebox on Channel 4, in which they showed audiences reaction to the last six minutes of the first episode of 'Banished'. It was heart breaking and beautiful to see how much people engaged with it. I was EXACTLY the same watching it! I was gripped and tense and crying...and I know what happens.

'Banished' is really a seven hour film that just gets more gripping and more thrilling. I'm so excited for people to see it as a whole piece, and see what Jimmy McGovern has painted. Episode one sets up the characters, it is a tiny little taste and ends in this euphoric state almost. As the show goes on we really test the love and strength and character of these people. I'm so excited for audiences! I shall say no more.

Can you tell us about your character, Private Buckley?

Sergeant Timmins describes Buckley as "an ugly, ugly man," This is how he is known in the camp. He is loathed. He is easy to goad and quick to anger, and finds it hard to restrain the negative aspects of his nature. He is also everywhere. He seems to observe everyone, like an owl. But he is also alone and very aware of it. I suppose the most unique aspect of Buckley, which we learn as the series goes on, is his self awareness. Jimmy has yet again written, not surprisingly, a truly multi-layered, multi-souled character that goes on a beautiful journey.

I know you can't give plotlines away, but how likely do you think it is that you'll be filming a second season?

I can't speak for private Buckley or "Buckers", as the crew came to know him, because it would be a spoiler. In fact speaking on any character would be a spoiler so I'm not sure how to respond to that question. I think Jimmy has big plans to tell the story of the indigenous Australians and I'm excited to see how he merges the stories of the convicts with that of the indigenous people. I will say that I personally would be very excited to see certain characters' stories continue to unfold.

The show has a great cast, what was it like on set?

It was a huge learning experience for me. So many fantastic actors in one place all doing such wonderful work. The whole cast and crew were like family by the end, we survived giant lunch stealing Kookaburras, Mouse Trap and Funnel Web spider attacks as well as Great Whites (I should clarify, no one was actually 'taken' during the making of Banished, 'taken' being the local reference to shark attacks.....)

Also, I had the fortune of being mentored by Dan Percival (the Director of episodes 1-3). He had great faith in me throughout the series and really provided me the atmosphere I needed to work in, and I am incredibly grateful for that.

Jimmy McGovern is highly acclaimed, what do you think is so special about his writing?

Everything Jimmy writes is unafraid. His enormous empathy, courage and skill shine through in his writing. I've said it before and I believe it, if Jimmy had lived in the middle of the 20th century he would have been a dissident writer in a gulag in Siberia. As it is, we get to enjoy his genius on our TV screens. Very few writers can look at a situation, event or injustice, insightfully diagnose it, and then write about it so beautifully.

He represents the underdog, the downtrodden, the people in society who can't always speak for themselves. He gives them a voice. He offers a guttural, raw and completely honest view of people, tapping in to the very essence of what we are, complex walking contradictions, and his writing embraces that complexity and shows how beautiful we are because of it.

^r What other recent drama series are you impressed with and why?

I don't know if it counts as recent, but I only recently finished *Breaking Bad*. That stood out to me as a bench mark in drama over the past few years. It is a perfect mix of pain, humour, excitement and ambition all rolled up into the great character of Walter White, who I think defines the "walking contradiction" thing I was referring to earlier. I love any drama series that is original and honest like that.

You've got some exciting projects coming up this year as well haven't you. Can you tell us about those?

I recently finished working on 'Suffragette', starring Carey Mulligan and Meryl Streep and directed by the fantastic Sarah Gavron. *Suffragette* tells the story of the foot soldiers of the women's liberation movement. It's beautifully written by Abi Morgan, and I think more necessary now than ever. I felt very honoured to be involved with it and to be around the wonderful work of such a tremendous cast and crew. It's a nice feeling when you know you're part of something special that will hopefully resonate for many years to come.

There are a few other projects I've recently finished that I'm very excited about. The first is 'Code of a Killer' for ITV, directed by James Strong. It tells the story of the first use of DNA to catch a murderer in the late eighties. And I'm also right in the middle of shooting a very fun cameo role in 'Apocalypse Slough' for Sky One. It's an absolutely hilarious comedy with Rob Lowe and Megan Mullally about the end of the world...and Slough!