



BY KATYA DIAKOW



The Siren Next Door

In an exclusive interview with *Lifestyle*, Alberta-born **Elisha Cuthbert** talks hockey, 24, and her love of the film set

Elisha Cuthbert is the definition of a Hollywood bombshell: Blue-eyed and blonde, a bubbly personality and a Google search that garners thousands of provocative

snaps. She's undeniably sexy, but she's never been content to sit at home waiting for opportunity to come knocking.

After starting as a model at age nine, the Calgary-born Cuthbert grew up in front of a national TV audience, most notably on the series *Popular Mechanics for Kids*. From 1997 to 2000, she spent her days explaining how stuff worked to other children. Her reporting even caught Hillary

Clinton's attention, prompting the then First Lady to invite Cuthbert to visit the White House.

"As a professional actor, it's been important for me to seek out different roles and different movies," she says. "Telling stories is only special when the characters are unique and different every time. I have the determination to discover, within acting, characters far more complicated than myself."



STAR TURNS: (left) Cuthbert with charming co-star Jesse Bradford as the free-spirited “Jordan” in *My Sassy Girl*; (facing page, far left) flashing a *Sassy* smile; (facing page, top to bottom) getting to know Emile Hirsch in teen romp *The Girl Next Door*; manipulating Camilla Belle as a femme fatale in *The Quiet*; passing a *Quiet* moment with Martin Donovan; surviving — just barely — the *House of Wax*.

With this sense of drive, Cuthbert finished high school and then sat her parents down for a serious conversation: She was determined to move from Montreal to Los Angeles, alone, at 17. Looking back, she says it’s only today that she understands and appreciates what a brave and bold move that was.

“At that time in my life no one, not even my parents, could have stopped me,” she says. “Who I was — and wanted to be — was very clear to me. So I knew that L.A. had to be the next step and I trusted my gut completely — oh to be 17 and fearless again!”

Her gamble paid off. Nearing the end of her make-it-or-break-it trial period, Cuthbert received a script for the pilot episode of *24* and landed the role that would make her famous — Kim Bauer, Kiefer Sutherland’s foxy and fearless daughter-in-danger. This May, after a five-year break, she returns to *24* for the hit show’s seventh season.

“I started discovering Kim Bauer at

18 years old, and here I am at 26 still chipping away at her. To play one single character over the last eight years or so has been a blessing,” Cuthbert says. “I always say how amazing and lucky I am to have had the opportunity that is *24* in my life.”

In 2003, ready to stretch a little, Cuthbert took on small but memorable roles in two high-profile films: *Love Actually* and *Old School*. The following

year, she starred in *The Girl Next Door* — a saucy teen comedy where she played a former porn star who befriends a shy neighbour, played by then up-and-comer, Emile Hirsch (*Into The Wild, Milk*).

After honing her comedic chops, Cuthbert headed in a different direction, joining the ensemble of the 2005

horror flick, *House of Wax*. “People often ask me about my ‘transition’ after *24*,” she says. “Every episode, every film, and every year in L.A. has been a different kind of transition. That in itself could be a whole other article!”

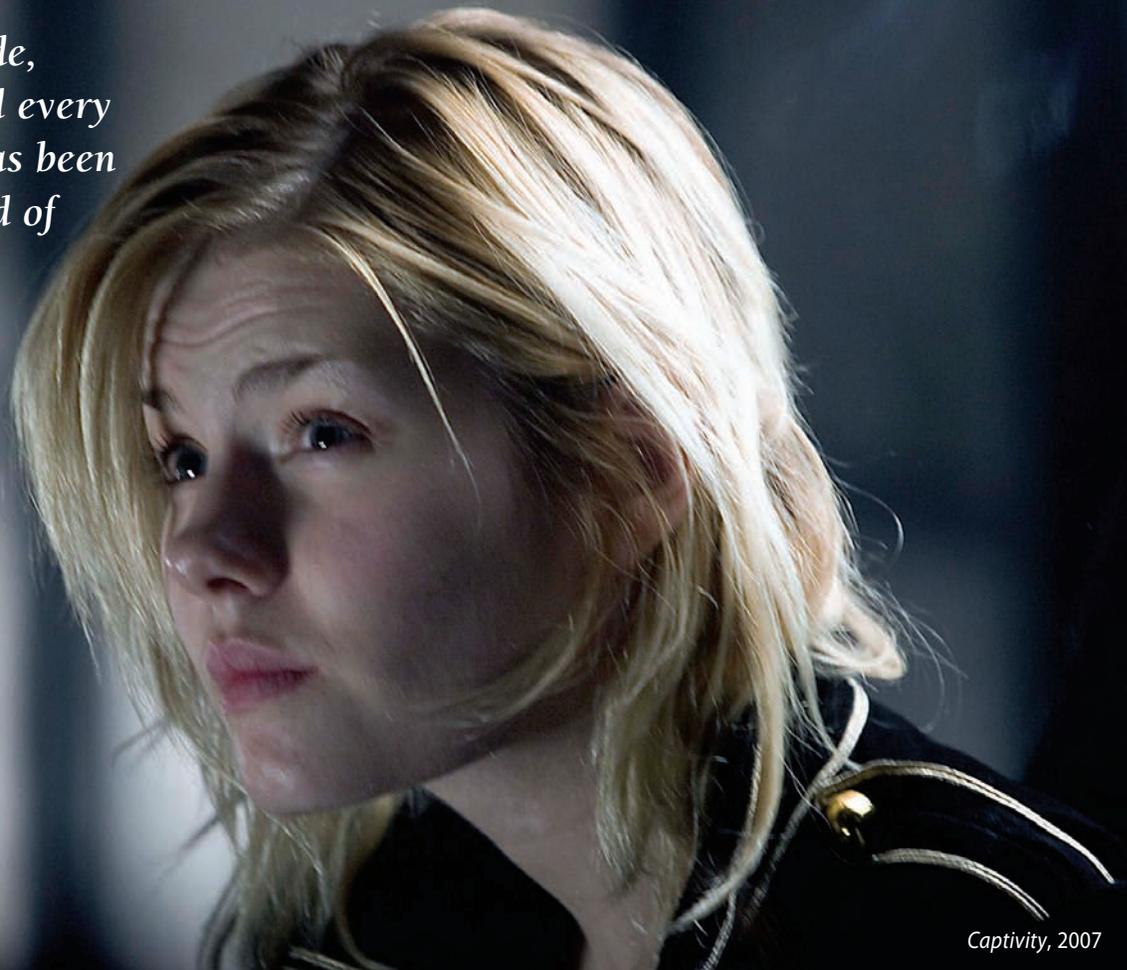
As her star power has increased, so has Cuthbert’s sex appeal among fans. The actress gets regular coverage from men’s magazines like *FHM* and *Maxim*, ranking her among the sexiest female

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stars. She says the attention can be flattering and fretful at the same time.

“To be honest, I sometimes worry, and I’ll tell you why. On one hand it’s extremely flattering, and yet on the other hand, I hope the majority of my fans see more than just a pretty face,” she says. “I try not to let titles dictate who I am, good or bad. Then again, we’ll

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Captivity, 2007

Selected Filmography

- *The Six Wives of Henry Lefay* (2009)
- *My Sassy Girl* (2008)
- *Captivity* (2007)
- *The Quiet* (2005)
- *House of Wax* (2005)
- *The Girl Next Door* (2004)
- *Love Actually* (2003)
- *Old School* (2003)
- *24* (TV, 2001–2004, 2009)
- *Lucky Girl* (TV-movie, 2001)
- *Popular Mechanics for Kids* (TV, 1997–2000)

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Though her life looks glamorous on the outside, she relies on family and sports to keep her sense of reality in check. Cuthbert says she’s always been a certifiable hockey nut; her brother and mother play on teams in Canada, and she holds season’s tickets for the L.A. Kings. A few years ago, the star even wrote a blog for the NHL, in which she related how she had been too star-struck by Wayne Gretzky to even say hello.

As for the future, Cuthbert will continue pursuing diverse projects. As well as reviving her role on *24*, she can be seen with Colm Feore in the CBC mini-series *Guns*, on the big screen in the romance *My Sassy Girl* and the comedy

The Six Wives of Henry Lefay with Tim Allen, and heard lending her voice to the animated feature *Cat Tale*.

“Truthfully, at the end of my day, I find myself having gone through 12 or more hours of working on set and enjoying every minute of it,” she says. “Sometimes I do wonder... if my joy should come from the amount of viewers or box office numbers, but that would be a lie.”

A veteran performer at age 26, Cuthbert has avoided the burnout that afflicts so many young stars, and remains firmly in love with her craft. “My time on set is where I’m most happy; and when people come out to watch or take an hour out of their week to see me, that’s a bonus.” •