

A photograph of Ryan Reynolds sitting up in a bed with white linens. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark tie. He is looking off to the side with a slight smile. He is holding a rolled-up newspaper in his hands. The newspaper has the word 'Centro' and 'Española' visible. The background is a dimly lit room with a lamp on the left.

REYNOLDS, UNWRAPPED

He's bantered with Sandra Bullock in *The Proposal* and battled beside Hugh Jackman in *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*. Now, Ryan Reynolds teams with Helen Mirren on screen to take on the Austrian government in *Woman in Gold*, while off screen, he plays loving husband to Blake Lively and superdad to their new baby girl.

By Andrew Myers | Photography by John Russo | Styling by Ashley Schulte
Shot on location at the JW Marriott, Santa Fe

What do a charismatic gambler, a hapless serial killer and a dogged young lawyer have in common? This may sound like the setup for a joke, but it's actually a list of Ryan Reynolds' most recent roles.

In January, the witty, self-deprecating, ridiculously handsome 38-year-old Canadian actor's road movie, *Mississippi Grind* (in which he plays a gambler), was well received when it debuted at the Sundance Film Festival. February brought his performance as a killer in the dark comedy-thriller, *The Voices*. And April 3, the highly anticipated drama *Woman in Gold* opens. Based on the true story of Maria Altmann, the film chronicles the Holocaust survivor's decade-long battle with the Austrian government to recover a portrait of her aunt that had been illegally seized by the Nazis in 1930s Vienna. The painting in question is Gustav Klimt's masterpiece "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I," and Reynolds co-stars as the lawyer determined to get restitution. "It's not a showy role," he says with characteristic modesty. "I'm there to support Helen." Dame Helen Mirren, that is.

Best known for playing action heroes in *Green Lantern*, *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* and the upcoming *Deadpool*, as well as Sandra Bullock's love interest in *The Proposal*, Reynolds prides

set the household's tenor and tone. While hardly Dickensian, it was often "e-n-s-e," he says, stretching and squeaking the word for Reynolds-ian comic relief.

To cope, young Reynolds escaped into his imagination. "I lived in my own head," he confides. "It was a fun, safe place to be." He learned to use humor, his naturally quick wit and sense of timing to his advantage; and he instinctively knew when a joke would "produce a laugh, not a scowl." Reynolds also honed what he says were already high degrees of sensitivity, perception and an "overall awareness of everything that was happening around me, who was around me, what they might be thinking and feeling, and what they might do." He also imagined what it would be like to be other people. "Quite simply, I was good at it."

Channeling characters wasn't the only thing the young Reynolds excelled at. Even as a teen, Reynolds—who was named *People's Sexiest Man Alive* in 2010—was a hunk. He was athletic and fast on both the football field and baseball diamond. Plus, he had a precocious point of view. "I certainly tried to cultivate aspects of my personality that weren't based on brawn because I couldn't win in that department," he says.

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himself on his versatility. His movies run the gamut of genres and budgets, and he portrays characters that are both good and bad, sympathetic and not.

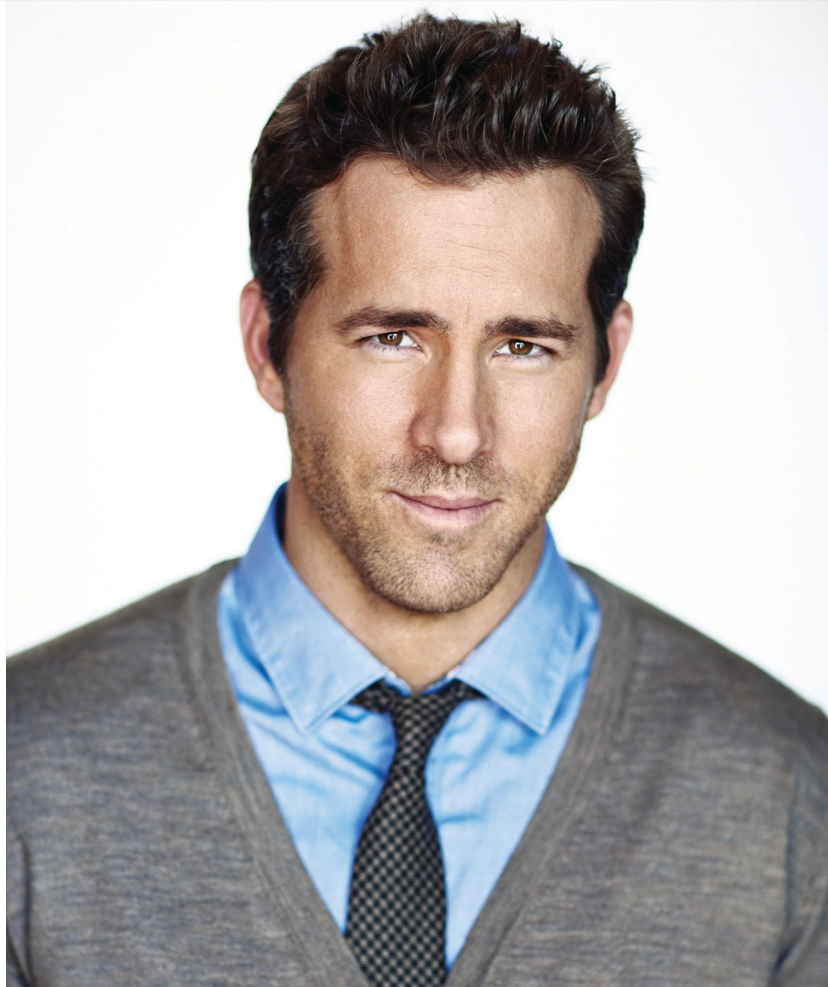
Chatting in the kitchen of the house he and wife Blake Lively share in a quiet suburb of New York City, I ask Reynolds how he picks his roles. "A Magic 8 Ball, of course!" he quips. He takes a beat and continues: "Honestly, I've never really known where I belong in the merry-go-round sh*t storm of Hollywood. It's a blessing and a curse, but I've never really planted my foot in one genre."

The ability to shape-shift, it turns out, comes as no surprise once he sheds light on that great artistic determiner, the family. Growing up in Vancouver's middle-class neighborhood of Kitsilano, the youngest of four boys, Reynolds did not come from a home filled with fun, frivolity or flights of fancy, or one that encouraged the arts and artistic inclinations. That's not to say there wasn't camaraderie among the brothers, but it translated to ribbing and rambunctious, repair-the-plaster-afterward roughhousing, not long walks or deep talks. Warmth and support came from Mom, but it was his father, a tough, taciturn cop, who

Reynolds realized his defense mechanisms were an asset. "I learned I could make kids laugh, and I liked that a lot," he says. "As a shy kid, it was a form of self-protection." His first stage experience was in drama class when he was 12 years old. "I didn't take it seriously at all. I never memorized my lines. All I really cared about was aping Chevy Chase movies, trying to make those solid-gold lines my own and to mimic their easy delivery. Frankly, that taught me a ton. Definitely more than the class."

The following year, Reynolds went to an open casting call for Nickelodeon's new teenage soap opera, *Fylogen*, and landed a part. "I went from 6,000 kids to a couple hundred to 50 to the cast of 13." What followed were four seasons of the show and a string of small TV roles that generated enough cash for him to move out on his own at age 16. He earned a high school diploma, took survival jobs (driving a forklift, working in a restaurant) and discovered that, while he liked performing, he was increasingly passionate about television. "I knew many would have traded anything to get the jobs I was getting, but I knew I could live without them," he says. "I was doing it only because I could do it."

Time for a change. After a brief stint at community college,



All styling by Hugo Boss

Grooming by Kim
Yoshimoto for Chanel
at starworkartists.com



PHOTO ASSISTANT: GUY ARAUJO AND DUSTIN MONTZ

which "felt incredibly wrong after 45 minutes," he decided to hit the road. "I got in my sh*tty Jeep, lied to get across the U.S. border and drove to L.A. to enroll in 'The Groundlings.'" There was one problem. He didn't have enough money for improv school. In fact, he had hardly any money at all. His solution? "I called five agents and told them that if they sent me out on five auditions, I'd land a job," he says. He was promptly cast in the ABC TV sitcom *Two Guys and a Girl*. Three years later, when the series ended, his film career officially began.

Reynolds' first starring role was in *National Lampoon's Van Wilder*, a low-budget collegiate comedy, which was followed by flicks that include *Blade: Trinity*, a remake of *The Amityville Horror*; and then *Green Lantern*, the big-budget bust that was supposed to launch Reynolds as a franchise superhero. He moans, "That's the last time I sign on to a movie that doesn't have a script. I made a lot of movies that didn't work or that I didn't even see. I take responsibility for that." Along the way came *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* and *Safe House*, modest successes like *Definitely, Maybe* and milestones such as *The Proposal*, one of the highest-grossing rom-coms in history.

There were, however, no big breakout roles or parts that secured his status as a household name. Instead, Reynolds has had a steady stream of work in a career that can be measured inch by inch rather than leaps and bounds. In fact, he's most recognizable for his paparazzi-punished personal life: an engagement to singer and fellow Canadian Alanis Morissette (2004 to 2007), a marriage to Scarlett Johansson (2008 to 2010), his 2013 marriage to Lively (whom he met on the *Green Lantern* set, an example of good coming from bad) and most recently the media firestorm over the name of their new baby (whose name he still hasn't officially confirmed). "It's not like we were being secretive about her name. We just didn't want her to learn when she's older that we announced it on Twitter," says Reynolds.

At this moment, the new daddy reveals that he's absolutely exhausted—a result of taking care of a newborn who is allergic to sleep and having just taken a flight from Los Angeles on which he barely slumbered at all. Still, Reynolds and Lively are hoping to have more children, and he's quite content with the trajectory of his career. In fact, he's made peace with the fact that he might not be the next Tom Cruise. "While I'd savor the obscene job security of being a franchise movie star, I'm okay if that never happens," he insists. For him, it remains all about variety. "Looking back when I'm an arthritic, ancient actor, I want to see versatility, a broad range across genres, with each genre done well. I don't know if I could say that now, but I try. I'm trying."

Which brings us back to *Woman in Gold*. What surprised him most about the film's leading lady, Helen Mirren? "Her pretty mouth. She can swear with the best of them," he says without hesitation. Turning serious, he adds, "Before starting to film, I was so charmed by how nervous she was to play the role. It was indicative of somebody so alive, somebody who really cares about what she does. I found that supremely inspiring."

It takes one to know one. **D**