

# stellar Q&A

## ANTHONY HOPKINS

actor

Interview by TIFFANY BAKKER

**You won an Academy Award in 1992 for playing Dr Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence Of The Lambs*. Do people still come up to you on the street and mention Chianti and fava beans?** Yes [laughs], but it doesn't bother me at all. People say the lines to me or want me to say them. They're interested [in the film] and want to know more. But it's a long time ago. We made that film 27 years ago... I enjoyed doing it, but it's like any other film. I was just lucky on that one, that's all.

***“There’s nothing special about actors; it just happens to be a well-paid public job”***

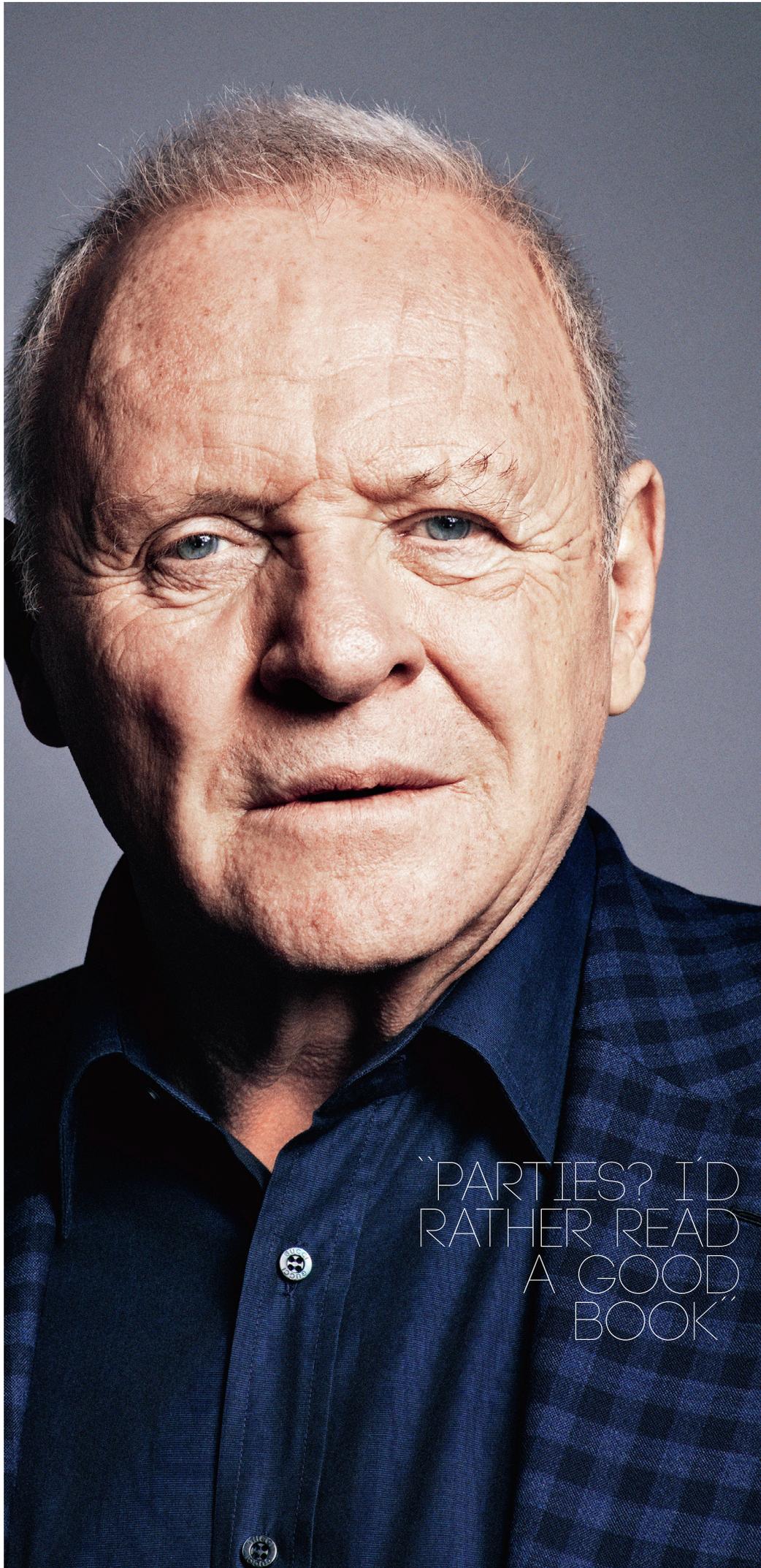
**Your co-star Jodie Foster said in an interview she was petrified of you on set and that you didn't speak during filming. Is that how you remember it?** That's not true. She said that on [UK chat show] *The Graham Norton Show*. Jodie... she wasn't being truthful. It's a good story, but we did talk. I was more nervous of her - she'd just won an Oscar for *The Accused*. We'd have a chat between takes or eat lunch together, but I was stuck inside of a glass booth most of the time.

**You're one of many movie stars who've gravitated to TV, having recently appeared in *Westworld*. Is it just that films aren't much chop anymore?** I don't know about that, but I thought *Westworld* was terrific. The scripts were great [but] to tell you the truth, I didn't know what the story was about because I didn't have time to learn it all; I had to learn my own part. I still don't know what it was about [laughs].

**Now you're in the latest instalment of *Transformers*, a movie franchise about interchangeable robots and cars. Doesn't seem like the sort of role you'd usually go for...** I like to work with good directors and Michael Bay was a terrific director, and to work with Mark Wahlberg was pretty good stuff. I had one of the best times I've had in a long time. We had a drone flying inside of a church. Only on a Michael Bay film would you have a drone inside of a church.

**At 79, you're also an acclaimed artist and composer. How does that fit in with your acting?** I play the piano most days and I paint a lot. I've had shows in Las Vegas and Houston recently. They sell! I don't have any training. A friend of mine said, "Don't train. Once you start training you will ruin yourself." I just do what I want and go and paint. And that's been the same for acting.

**You're on Twitter. What do you make of social media?** My wife [Stella Arroyave] does it for me. It was Mark Wahlberg who introduced me to it. We were in Oxford filming and he said, "Do you want to be on social media?" So I stood with him and got a photo on the film set. I was totally clueless about it, which I tend to be about most things. Then my wife encouraged me to do it. She'll take a photo or a video and say, "Look in the camera and say hello." She reads me the responses from people and I'm very flattered and thrilled by them.



"PARTIES? I'D  
RATHER READ  
A GOOD  
BOOK"

**Do younger actors ever ask your advice on navigating Hollywood?**

They don't ask me that much. If anyone asks me, "How do you deal with this business?" I say, "Don't take it all so seriously. Just lighten up." Some people get very serious about it. One actor asked me, "How do you stay sane?" I said just don't act as if you're entitled. Because once you believe you're entitled, you'll go slowly mad, because you're not special. We're not special at all. There's nothing special about actors; it just happens to be a well-paid public job.

**But some actors – let's be honest – do act as if they're a bit special.**

Anyone who says they're special is doomed. It makes you very unhappy because then there's this expectation all the time - work expectation or entitlement - then you go mad because nobody's going to feed you like a baby. And I think the serious side of the thing - the lethal side of it - is that you start believing it and then gradually descend into a nightmare of things like alcohol and drugs. You see it happening. I remember a famous guy in Hollywood - I won't say who - who died of an overdose many years ago and all he wanted to do was go to parties, parties, parties.

**So the party side of Hollywood never interested you?**

I thank God it wasn't in my nature to enjoy that wild life. I've never enjoyed it. Parties, I can take or leave. I'll occasionally go to something if there's an event, but very rarely. I'd rather read a good book.

**You have played so many iconic roles. Can you pick a favourite?**

No, not really. It all fades from the memory. I don't watch anything I'm in. I've got a couple of things out now. I will go and see *Transformers: The Last Knight* because there's a premiere in Los Angeles, but I don't pay much attention to it. I'm not that interested in my job. I mean, I love doing it, but I couldn't care less about looking back on it. Sometimes a film will be good, sometimes it won't be and well, so what? Who cares?

**You're really not bothered?** I saw a film of mine recently. I can't even remember what it was, and I saw a bit of it and was like, "I don't even remember doing that." Oh my god, I'd forgotten all about it. I paint and go to art shows and I think, "Did I do that?" So it's always a pleasant surprise.

**So when would you say you're happiest?** Right now, being alive. ★

*Transformers: The Last Knight* is in cinemas nationwide on June 22.