

Nathalie Cox

**Co-Founder & Creative Director, CountryLine TV &
Radio**

Media Masters – March 17th 2022

Listen to the podcast online, visit www.mediamasters.fm

Welcome to Media Masters, a series of one-to-one interviews with figures at the top of the media game. Today I'm joined down the line by Nathalie Cox, Actor, model and co-founder of Countryline, the only global app for country music fans. Nathalie launched Countryline five years ago, capitalising on the fast-growing audience for country music worldwide and becoming its first ever creative director. The one-stop subscription service gives fan backstage interviews, exclusive sessions, gig guides and access to tickets. A successful actress, she has appeared in films including *Kingdom of Heaven* and was award-nominated for her performance in the video game *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*. She most recently appeared in the Netflix movie, *Father Christmas Is Back*. Nathalie, thank you for joining me.

Thank you for having me.

You have the ultimate portfolio career. Do you not? I mean, model, actor, video games and now country music entrepreneur. How do you fit it all in?

I dunno whether there's enough hours in the day sometimes. I don't know, to be honest, it's just happened that way that I have ended up with numerous careers basically over the years and rather than stop one and start another one I just keep adding basically.

But you clearly are a very passionate, very creative person. It's great that you found an outlet for, as you were saying, all of the various different facets of that creativity.

It's been organic, if I'm honest. I didn't really set out to do all of these things, but I've had opportunities along the way, and I'm very much a believer in when an opportunity comes knocking sometimes you just have to grab it and run with it and see what happens. So I sort of found myself in the position where I am a co-founder of a

successful digital business, which I never thought that I would ever do anything like that, but I'm still managing to be able to do modelling and acting as well, and acting is my big passion, really. So I love being able to do that alongside country music. It's great.

Modeling's my big passion, but unfortunately I suffer from facial hideousness so I've never got any gigs, but I'd abandon whatever it is I do for a living in a heartbeat if I could start to become some kind of catalogue model or something. Tell us about your passion for country music then, because I listen to Chris Country Radio, what will now be CountryLine Radio, cause you guys have bought out and you are rebranding, tell us about how you started on that journey. It's unusual, isn't it for British people to be such big fans of country music like we are.

It is unusual and it's getting better, I'd say better in the way that people are becoming more aware of the genre and it doesn't seem to be as cheesy as it used to be. So it's not as embarrassing to say that you're a country music fan anymore I think. When I was in my teens, I didn't really tell any of my friends that I liked country music, but I sort of grew up with it. My parents were both keen country music fans. And so I sort of grew up listening to Willie Nelson and Dolly Parton and Johnny Cash. And it was just always a type of music that spoke to me. I think they have stories in their songs and I always really enjoyed that. But yeah, it was something that I sort of kept for quite a long time. All my friends were into the cool music and I just sort of would nod along and go, yes, me too. When secretly I'm listening to Carlene Carter on my headphones. But yeah, it's definitely a growing genre and it's becoming much more widespread and in the states it's huge obviously but in the UK it's become a real passion for a lot of people and more and more people are discovering it and more and more people are realising that it's actually quite a great genre to listen to. That's why we kind of ended up doing CountryLine, it was a passion of mine that I've managed to turn into a business.

I came out of the closet as a country music fan about ten years ago and now it's cool, isn't it? It's like the up and coming thing is, especially when you look at the up and coming CTC festival, it's an exciting time for country fans. The festival's going to London, Glasgow, Dublin, there's been an explosion of interest now. I no longer feel deeply ashamed that I'm a country music fan, dare I say, I'm proud.

There is an explosion, definitely. I mean the CTC festival, the Country to Country festival at the O2 is a prime example. When they first started it, I think it was about sort of seven years ago, it was just two nights down at the O2 and that was it. And they sort of get six or seven big name artists to come over from Nashville to play. And now obviously we had a little break during the pandemic, but this year and what they've done for the past couple of years is they have it in London, Glasgow and Dublin in the same weekend. And so they get the artist to come over and the artist sort of does a triangle if you know what I mean? So Miranda Lambert for example, is playing London on the Friday night and then she flies up and does Glasgow on a

Saturday night. And then she does Dublin on Sunday night. And Darius Rucker does Glasgow on this Friday night and does that trip the other way around kind of thing. So, it just goes to show that they can put on big concerts on the same night with the same artists and still sell out the venues, is a huge example of how big the fan base is growing.

And the country audience wants to know everything about their artists. I mean, CountryLine has done really well in tapping into that demand.

Well, that's part of the reason why we started it because as a country fan myself, I realised that when you live outside of America, there is a lack of information and availability about country music. And we do want to know about the artists. Country music is more than just music. It's a lifestyle, it's the country lifestyle that people love. It's the cars, it's the open road, it's the food and the venues and everything else, the boots and the hats, you know, so there's not much of that available outside of the US. In the US, there's numerous radio stations, there's country music on the television. It is mainstream, as soon as you step outside of there and especially to Europe, it's just lacking. And so as I fan myself alongside Simon Walker, my co-founder, we realised that there was a niche market there that was hungry for something like CountryLine. We built it from a fans point of view because we're fans ourselves, so it is that one stop shop for everything that you adore about the music and the genre and lifestyle. So we cover things like restaurants in Nashville, where are the best places to go to, fashion and as well as the music, the artists, what the artists do in their spare time, a lot of them do charity work. We cover all of that. It really gives fans a proper glimpse behind the curtain and all of the stuff that they possibly could want when it comes to country music.

I mean, it's fantastic, isn't it how these niche players in streaming and apps and content are emerging. I had Craig Engler on the other day, he's the CEO of Shudder, which is a horror film and TV show app. And he was saying that their job is to build on and run alongside your existing Netflix subscription. No one's gonna cancel Netflix and go to Shudder, as a country music fan, of course I'm gonna have Apple Music, but I'm also gonna have CountryLine as well. How does that work then, tell our listeners about CountryLine in terms of what the business model is, how do people join up? What do they get for it?

Well, it is exactly what you just said. It's not there to replace your streaming services. Netflix and Amazon, they've conquered the market. They have way more money and more resources than we ever will, but we don't want to replace them. But what it is and in the same way that the guys at Shudder have realised that diehard fans who are really passionate about something, they don't want to spend hours scrolling through playlist and scrolling through things on TV, trying to find the one film or the one interview that they haven't seen kind of thing. So we offer a curated selection for the country music fans. So instead of them having to go onto YouTube and search for things and then maybe go onto some of the other websites that's available to search for things and then tune into the radio and maybe go on Spotify and see what's on there. We basically are packaging it up in a really nice country music themed box for

them and saying, here's everything that you possibly could want this week, for example. And it changes weekly. So we have content that goes up daily. We do a lot of interviews with artists. We do sessions, we cover red carpet events. We have music videos, we have backstage stuff. We cover all the big festivals inside the US and in the UK as well. So it's really everything that you could possibly want, but then there's an element of a fan club to it as well because the biggest thing about country music that I absolutely love is the feeling that it's a community, that these are your friends. I always remember the first time that I went to a big country music gig by myself in London, because I didn't want to tell any of my friends I was going and I thought none of them would want to come with me. So I went along by myself and I just remember walking down the stairs into this venue and it was absolutely heaving with people in plaid shirts and cowboy boots. And I just stood there and thought, these are my people. This is where I belong. And everyone's so friendly and everybody's so nice. So we wanted to incorporate that into CountryLine. So it really is a fan club community. So if you become a CountryLine plus member, which is the subscription side of it, so CountryLine is a free app, a lot of interviews and things like that are free to watch and then if you subscribe to become a full country line plus member, you get some of our member perks, which are discounts for country music related things. So we have some vendors that we work with who sell hats and things like that and accessories, you get discounts for that. You can get perks such as queue jumping at certain festivals, in the beer line basically and things like that. And these perks change as the year goes on and we are rolling out more with new partners and then also behind the paywall, we have some of our premium content. So we are launching the TV series Nashville, which was super popular when it came out in the UK, we have got the box set of that available. We've got archive concerts that you can't watch anywhere else. So we've got sort of Mel Haggard and Willie Nelson concerts that are amazing to watch, you're just watching history basically. So that's all what you get for being a CountryLine plus member plus we've always got things that are coming out basically, so it's a case of watch this space, but there's always something new that is dropped every day.

How did you come up with the idea for it? It's one of these things where I'm annoyed I didn't think of the idea.

That's sweet. Thank you for saying that. How did we come up with the idea?

It's kind of a backhanded compliment, isn't it? A searing thing, well I should have thought of that.

It's nice. I'll take it. Thank you. It was sort of an organic thing between Simon and myself. We sort of sat there and thought if you were a country fan, what would you like to watch? And I think at the beginning we did think it was going to be Netflix for country music fans and just a whole bunch of country music themed TV stuff, and interviews and that was it. And then we realised that there's a lot more out there that they want and there's a lot more out there that's available. And also we've started doing our own original content so we now have a weekly magazine TV show that goes out on cable in the states and then it's available on the app afterwards on the

CountryLine plus side of the app, which is like e-entertainment news but for CountryLine, it's kind of a chat show meets country news. And it's wonderful and it's about lifestyle and it's about music and we've got artists coming on and doing sessions and stuff. So the app itself has developed over the years. We are entrepreneurs. One of my favourite sayings that I stole from Simon was we are entrepreneurs, we're making this up as we go along. So we are happy to change things when we realise what the fans want. So we listen to people's feedback very much. And when somebody's like, oh, I really love it if you could give us more stuff from Nashville, we started to do a box set called Direct From Nashville that is literally just interviews and sessions with artists right in the heart of music city. So we're changing it as we go along, depending on what the demand is.

I always remember Del Boy in Only Fools and Horses used to say “he who dares Rodders, he who dares.” And I actually think that, although we used to laugh at him, it does take a certain courage does it not to actually start something like this? Cause I mean, you've come up with the idea, it's going great guns, I'm a subscriber, I'm a consumer of your content and I pay full price listeners, by the way, I don't get any special deals, but my point is it could have failed, couldn't it? Like it takes courage. It's alright now when it's been a big success to look back and perhaps mistakenly think that was inevitable it was gonna succeed, but actually, it might have failed.

I mean it takes courage to do something like this. I can tell you, I definitely wouldn't have done this if it hadn't been for Simon. Simon Walker has done numerous projects before. And so I don't wanna say he knows what he's doing. If he's listening, he'll say that he does know what he's doing. But he does know what he's doing, but I felt comfortable starting a business with him. He's been through some of the obstacles that you come up with when you start a new business, but it still is terrifying. And we spent a lot of time at the very beginning going, is this a good idea? Or do we just think it's a good idea? But then the turning point for us was we spent a lot of time at the very beginning doing the groundwork, doing the foundations, building the relationships in Nashville because you can't run a country music business without friends in Nashville basically. That's where country music is. It would be like trying to run a movie business and never go to LA. So we spent a lot of time there and the more people we spoke to in Nashville, the more feedback we got from them, which was that they wanted something like this to exist outside of the US. They want there to be a platform for their artists, for the rest of the world. And so all of a sudden we kind of were like, the penny dropped that actually we had got a good idea and it was working. And then the other feedback was when we actually launched it and people started to subscribe and watch it. And people were watching the videos, people tune in every day to see what we've got. It's a gradual build. You have to have faith that you'll get there eventually, but each time you get a new subscriber, each time you try something new and it works, great. And if you try something and it doesn't work, then you just pivot and do something else. I think as an entrepreneur, you just have to be willing to change, open to feedback and fly by the seat of your pants.

You seem to be doing it very well. I mean, I've been a listener to Chris Country Radio for many, many years. I know Chris and you guys acquired Chris

Country Radio. How's that going and tell us about it, you're about to rebrand it. In fact, by the time this comes out, it might well have a new name.

Yes, we are in the process of rebranding. So we have announced it. It has been announced on the radio and on social media that Chris Country Radio will be known from Monday, this Monday coming, actually. So when this comes out, yes, it will have all been done. It will then be called CountryLine radio. We love Chris at Chris Country and I'm a huge fan of the station. And when we started talking to him about the possible teaming up, basically, it just seemed like a perfect fit. He believes in what CountryLine is doing. He's very passionate about the growth of country music in the same way that we are. But for us, it was just a case of we're a country music app, but we don't play country music. We're not Spotify. So what's the next best thing. Or personally, what I think is better than Spotify and better than music streaming for services is the radio because you have that personal connection with the presenters and things like that. So to team up and to acquire a radio station was a logical step. And one that we are super happy with, we're super excited about the future and where we're going with it. And we're hoping that everyone enjoys what we've got in store. There are no huge changes. I would like to say, we are just rebranding the name, just so that it's in line with the rest of the company. But we are not taking away. We're adding to the station. So I think that people will really enjoy it.

Well, if we call it your day job, I suppose you have other day jobs. Tell our listeners about those. You said that acting was your primary joy and I asked you how you fit it all in, but tell us about your acting career. How did you get started on it? It seems that all of these things are additive, that they all feed off each other. You are a creative entrepreneur in many ways.

Oh, it's been a journey. I actually started out as a fashion model.

Yeah, so did I.

As many people do.

You didn't have to laugh as harshly as that. I know you know I'm grotesque, but I have feelings.

Not at all. It's such a weird thing to say that that was my first job because I never thought growing up oh, I want to be a model. It just never even crossed my mind that that was something that you could get paid to do in a way. I knew that models existed if you know what I mean, but I never sort of sat there and thought that's something I'd like to do. I got scouted in London and somebody came out to me from an agency and said, have you ever talked about modelling? And I promptly looked behind me to see if they were talking to somebody else, I know that sounds awful. Many, many models will tell you that they were not particularly attractive teenagers. And it's got something to do with the fact that we all have very oversized features. We're all a bit too tall, a bit too gangly. And our eyes are a bit too far apart, but somehow when you

take a picture of it, it works. So I just fell into it. I was super lucky and I know that I'm very, very lucky and I'm very grateful that I had the career that I did and I got to live in New York and I got to travel around the world and I did some big campaigns and I did lots of huge magazines and it was great and I love modelling. And I think that it's a fantastic industry that has a lot of potential if you are in it and you're sensible about it.

I just want to be judged by my personality, not by my looks. Cause I am a very attractive person and I just wish people would see beyond that with me.

It's hard when you're a model that you have to have very thick skin and you have to be like it's just about the fact I'm too tall or I'm not tall enough or I'm too fat or I'm too thin or I'm too blonde.

You sort of productize your physical appearance.

One of my favourite sayings is when I say something clever and somebody says, oh, that was good. And I say, "not just a hat stand" whilst I point to my head and then I follow are with, "except when I'm a model." And then I am literally a hat stand because you are just a glorified coat hanger. The modelling industry will hate me for saying that right now. But a lot of the time that is your job, you stand there and you make clothes look pretty. That's fine. There's all aspects to modelling. There are commercials and things like that where you do have a bit of a personality come through and stuff and it's not just about what you look like.

So how did you go from modelling star to screens star?

So again, I fell into it through my modelling agency, got my first job, which was Kingdom of Heaven with Ridley Scott. And just went for the casting. They were looking for a specific type for the girl to play Orlando Bloom's wife who was the lead in it. And they'd looked for actors in London and couldn't find the right person. So they opened it up to modelling agencies and said, do you have any girls who are comfortable in front of the camera, who've done a lot of commercials, that kind of thing. And I had, by that point, done a ton of commercials over the years. So I went along, got the job and that sort of started my acting career. And in the way that modelling is very much based on what you look like acting has that little bit extra, it's about you and your personality and whether you've got a bit of talent, I suppose, whether you can learn your lines. And although there's a famous actor, I need to find out who it was. He said that acting's really easy, just remember your lines and don't trip over the furniture. There's a bit more to it than that. But it's more than just modelling. Although some of the skills that I learned from modelling I've adapted into the acting thing, all that time that I spent in front of the camera has been super beneficial when it came to acting. So, I'm fully aware of the fact that people listening right now think that I'm really jammy basically, that I landed into modelling and I landed into acting, which I did, but I then worked very, very hard to make sure I could carve out a career for myself and both of them.

Yeah. If you were crap, you wouldn't have been asked back, which is probably when I think about it while we get fired all the time. I'll have to work on that with my therapist, but I mean, what type of acting do you prefer? Is it all the same to you? Or like, I know for example, you've done very well with the voice acting on the Star Wars games and so on. Do you enjoy that? Is that where you don't have to put makeup on? I mean, men don't have to put makeup on anywhere, but do you prefer doing the audio stuff or do you always want to be on screen? Are movies better than TV? How does it actually work?

So I do film and TV and computer games, like you just said, I do not do theatre. And the thought of doing it in theatre absolutely terrifies me. So I think there is a certain type of actor who excels at doing theatre. And I do think that that's where drama school comes in quite handy. I didn't go to drama school. I've taken classes and stuff at the actor centre in places like that over the years. But I do think that if you want to be a theatre actor, the drama school route is probably the wise choice. For me though, I love doing films because you get to really immerse yourself into the character for a length of time which is fab and fun. And you get to know your co-stars very well and you all sort of feed off each other and it really develops into something quite wonderful. TV is slightly different, especially if it's a sort of half hour comedy or something like that. That's much more fun. You have to think on your feet a bit. I've done a few TV shows where you film live in front of a studio audience, which is really fun and terrifying. I suppose that's a little bit like theatre, so yes, that's probably why I don't want to do theatre. It's scary when people are watching you. And then the computer games, um, when it's just audio, so when you're just doing voice acting, it's completely different because it's just you in a little goldfish bowl and somebody shouting directions at you and you delivering lines. There's another element of the computer games that I do, which is motion capture, which is super fun and completely different to other acting as well, where you get to put on like a weird sort of jumpsuit with lots of reflective dots on it and they paint your face. And you've got a giant head cam on and you sort of run around a human studio.

That's an average Saturday night for me.

Yes. Otherwise known as Tuesday. But the first time I did that, it was really challenging because there's no costumes. You have other actors, a lot of the time you do have other actors that you're working with. So they're in the studio with you, but all the props and things like that. And there's no set, everything sort of made up. And it very much feels like you are playing a game of pretend when you are a child. You know when you're a kid and you're running around playing like cops and robbers or something like that and you're like, okay, so the sofa is the Sheriff's office and things like that. Like when you're doing motion capture, it's a bit like that. It's like, that square on the floor is the desk and that square over there is the door that you walk through and it's just a vast space. So you have to use your imagination a lot more actually. But it's fun. It's really fun. I absolutely adore acting because I'm a giant kid at heart, I think. And it appeals to that part of me that I just get to run around pretending to be some different and doing make believe.

We had Michael Einstein, a friend of mine on Media Masters recently, he's an actor and a creative, he's a very big artist, but he was a well known playing a character called Chuckie in the show Sons of Anarchy. And he was saying that the character Chuckie was a serial masturbator so much so that they could his fingers off in the show. And he says, it's weird. He can be eating a burger in a restaurant. And people will just stare at him amazed that he has fingers as if they can differentiate between reality and him playing a character. But also he said, the Hollywood executives are the same, because he was sort of a mid tier character in Sons of Anarchy but was so memorable, he can't get a lot of other work cause people think, oh, there's Chuckie, is tight casting a problem. You could never play sort of an ugly person unless you had heavy makeup on, for example.

That's very sweet of you to say that, trust me, there are some mornings when I wake up first thing and I'm like ooh.

Every morning for me.

I do get cast a lot for sort of, we need a girl with a posh accent. That comes up quite a bit. So sort of over the years, my agent called me up and said, they need somebody with an RP accent, you're in. So we used to joke, one of my very first agents, that I would never ever do EastEnders, for example, because I just don't think I could do the east end accents, the way that they can on EastEnders basically. The irony being actually did one episode of EastEnders years ago but played a solicitor who clearly had a posh voice. So I was like, great, that's me. I think that typecasting does happen for people. And like you were saying, if you play a character and especially if you're playing a recurring character in a TV show, then people know you as that character and it can be quite difficult to let that go. In a way as frustrating as that is, I think that's a compliment to whoever played that character because it shows that they're a good actor and they immerse themselves so much into it that people can't differentiate between them and real life.

Michael said to me recently, and he was sort of being self appreciative, but he said that a lot of actors have that, what he would call the show off gene, they like the limelight. Not that there should be any shame in that, but do you have that?

I'm laughing because if my parents were here right now, they'd be like, yep. Yes, there's lots of pictures of me as a kid doing various dress ups and I was always the kid that would put on a show at Christmas for all the relatives and things like that. I'd put on little skits and things. And I think the show off gene is there. I do have friends that are actors who are actually incredibly shy amongst people. And if you put them down in a party, they dunno how to cope and they have to hide in the corner. So I don't think it's for everybody, but I do think there's a certain type of actor that does have that show off gene in a way. And it's partly because having that gene leads you towards that kind of career, because you've got to be able to stand up in front of

people that you've never met before and kind of make a bit of an idiot outta yourself to, in order to get the job and then when you get the job, you've got to turn up and make an idiot out yourself in front of way more people that you've just met for the first time. So it's partly a bit of a show off gene and partly a bit of a self confidence gene, but then the flip side of that is that most actors are incredibly insecure because we are faced with rejection almost on a daily basis.

I agree. And actually I was gonna ask you about that because in one sense, as a up and coming actor, the recognition is growing, you you've been right to hedge your bet because you're an entrepreneur, you're doing all of these other things, but like will there become a Sophie's choice moment where you have to choose. Acting is your first love, what happens if you get a huge Netflix show and you have to move to Alaska and live there for four years, how would that work? Would you just sort of jet and all the other stuff and fake your own death? How would it work?

I mean, that really is Sophie's choice. And I think that's my biggest fear. It's worked out quite well so far. So with acting, I haven't done a series regular, so where I've had to go away for sort of six months. So the most that I've sort of gone away is six weeks or actually last year I did end up away for almost three months, but that was a one off. But acting is very kind of pocketed almost. It's like the next four weeks I'm gonna be on set and I'm not gonna be available very much but then I'm gonna be off and I've got three months before my next job or six months before my job or something like that. It's not a consistent thing, so I can fit in CountryLine so to speak. CountryLine is my baby. And I do feel very, very protective about it because it's something that Simon and I have grown and it is successful and I'm super proud of it. And I'm super proud of all the people that we have working for us and all the people that have helped us get there. So it would be awful if I had to choose between the two. And honestly, I just don't think that I could. So as it works at the moment when I have to go off and shoot a movie or something, I'm doing emails after finishing filming, or I have a day off on a Saturday so I cram everything in then. And we've got a fantastic team who really sort of jump in when I'm not as available as I usually am. But to be honest, I don't think that I would ever be able to switch off completely from the CountryLine and I've never switched off completely. So I'm always lurking in the background.

All of these Hollywood air listers have their own vodka brands and various investments in media and so on. I mean, even if you did hit the Oscar winning big time level, then what's wrong with also having a series of other interests.

Well, exactly. I mean, I plan on having lots of others down the line, I think at some point, we'd love to have a CountryLine branded alcohol. I think there's whiskey there for sure. Country music fans love their whiskey.

Half the songs are about getting drunk. She's left me and therefore now I'm getting drunk all the time.

There you go. I'd love to do a fashion range with CountryLine. I think that there's a market there for boots and outfits and things like that.

I am available if you need a model. I mean, I would be a glorified hat stand for hats. On your acting career, I looked at your IMDB, the joke is every up and coming actor, you'll always see Midsummer Murders, Holby City, Casualty, I also saw those shows in your resume.

Yes, it used to be that every upcoming actor, way back in the day when I first started, you had to do The Bill because that had been going for about 500 years. And so it was a right of passage. So I managed to get onto the last season of The Bill, which I was quite pleased about. And then it's Casualty, Doctors and Holby City, you have to do the trifecta, which I managed to do as well. So Kate Winslet has done Casualty. So I think that we're in good company here. There's quite a lot of actors who have done it. It's one of those jobs that when you are sort of up and coming and starting out, you just sort of end up doing. And actually, doing a guest spot on casualty is a great way to learn on the job. Because it's a crew that's been doing it for a very long time. They're very professional. They know what they're doing. You can learn a lot from watching them. The cast have been there for a long time. Again, you can just learn from watching them. So when you go in to do just a week or so on something like that, it's actually really fun because you get to learn a lot. You get to speak to people who've been in the industry for a very long time. And usually as a guest appearance, you get a really juicy storyline. So something terrible happens and you know, or there's some kind of drama or you die or something, you get a nice death scene or if it's Casualty, there's usually blood and guts everywhere, which is always quite fun to work with. That sounds terrible. Sorry, but it's true.

How do you avoid being starstruck? So like, if you look at you play the lead in Miss Willoughby and The Haunted Bookshop, there's Kelsey Grammar. I would just want to go up to him all the time and say, you are off of Frasier. I love you. How do you sort of switch off the fact you've seen eight seasons of Frasier and like, oh yes, he's another fellow professional and we're all professionals, I wouldn't be able to do that. Does that take discipline?

I've never struggled with it to be honest. I mean, there's a few people that I've met along the way that I've sort of gone "oh gosh, it's you."

Thank you.

You're welcome. And I'm sure that there's some people that if I did meet them, I would lose it completely. But I think it's a case of who you idolise or who you really look up to or admire. Not look up to and admire because actually I admire quite a lot of actors and if I met them, I would just love to be able to shake their hand and say, I really admire your work. I always remember that I met a giant book nerd. I love to read. And I met one of my favourite authors once, and thought that I would be okay

because I've met Liam Neeson before and I've met Ridley Scott, and I've met famous people and you know, like this is gonna be fine. And then literally had to sign my book and when I got to the front of the queue, I just lost it completely and was like the dribbling fan that was like, "oh my God, I think you're amazing." And I was so shocked at myself basically that I had turned into this person, but I think it's that kind of when you love somebody so passionately like that because of what they do, like her books are incredible. I think that books speak to me in a wonderful way that movies speak to me as well in that way, that you absolutely love them and you think that's so creative and so wonderful. So if I met somebody from one of my favourite movies or something like that, maybe I would be a little bit starstruck, but I think when you've seen how movies are made and how unglamorous the world can be in the film industry, I think maybe that takes it away a bit and it becomes a bit more human to you.

Do you have a process in acting or processes as the Americans would say? I know obviously most people would know the difference between method acting and normal acting, how do you immerse yourself into character? How do you become that person temporarily? And obviously I've got friends who are actors and when they have to sort of experience emotions, huge elation or upset or grief, they have to call from a reservoir of like real emotion from themselves. So like you're putting yourself through an incredible emotional turmoil all the time. Just to sort of do your day's work.

That's a really tricky question to ask actually. And I think every actor has their own process and it's slightly difficult to explain if I'm honest. There's a lot of drawing on your own emotions. And I know for a fact that when I have to do sort of very emotional scenes, I'm not very nice to be around afterwards. Holby City is a good example of this. So I did Holby City and I did a week and a half of basically crying. It was a very tragic storyline and I played a young mom where there was something wrong with the baby and spent so much of my time getting myself into a state to be that traumatised emotional distraught mother that all I could do when I went home at night was sit in the bathroom and cry some more. I sort of got myself into this really depressed state and I could not talk to any of my friends or any of my family for about a week whilst I was doing it because it was a case of, I just had to isolate myself into this character. But it's slightly different for every character and what the roles are and what the project is really. It's different for everybody. I can't give you the definite answer of this is how I do it kind of thing. Because it is slightly different for each character and every actor will say something slightly different to how they do it.

Where are you gonna take CountryLine? I'm fascinated by that. Obviously you're fishing in a pond here that's lucrative as it were. Because your pioneers, but you can't take it back to Nashville cause that's covered. Is it that CountryLine will sort of slowly take over everywhere in the world that's not Nashville? Do you have a sort of medium and long term plan for it?

Long term plan is world domination, basically. We've got grand hopes.

What about outer space? I don't think you're ambitious enough.

Ah, we need to put a country music singer on Mars.

We most certainly do.

We need a CountryLine rocket. We want to expand. We want to be the biggest country brand outside the US and the place that country music fans in the rest of the world, in ROW go to get their fix basically. And the sky's the limit, that's the best thing about country music is that it's such a big genre and it's growing and it's super popular and it's getting more popular with each day that goes by. There is huge potential. So we're just gonna build it as big as we can basically.

Before the podcast started, I asked you to list the faults of Simon, your colleague, and you monologue at me for nearly two hours. I wonder whether you could sort of repeat a more condensed version, a precis of his failings as a human being.

I would just like to explain to anybody listening that Simon has been on your podcast as well and I really hope that he is listening.

He won't be.

Simon's great. I would actually say a little bit of advice for anybody that's starting a business. If you are going to start something that you are not sure if it's going to succeed, do it with somebody that you can laugh with and talk to because otherwise it's going to be miserable. There's been times when Simon and I have sat there going, what are we doing? You know, and other times when something amazing has happened and you wanna turn around to your best friend and give them a high five and be like, hey, look at us. So I would think that's a good piece of advice: if you're gonna start some crazy business, do it with somebody who's just as crazy as you.

Well, I should say I'm frightfully rude about our fellow Media Master guests, because obviously we're friends, all of us have known Simon for quite some time and he is a legend. I just wanted to say Nathalie, I think what you're doing is absolutely amazing. How are you making all of the various aspects of your career work, very grateful for you taking the time. Thank you so much.

Thank you very much for having me. I've really enjoyed it.