



logan shroyer

Words by NICOLE MOOREFIELD Photos by CATHERINE POWELL

LIFE HAS BEEN A WHIRLWIND AS OF late for 18-year-old Logan Shroyer, whose role as teenage Kevin Pearson in NBC's hit show *This Is Us* catalyzed his rise to television stardom.

Born in Torrance, California, Logan moved to Oklahoma when he was 5-years-old. In elementary school, Logan was "the kid in the back who was quiet and weird", he promises. Aside from a school play, acting wasn't on Logan's radar until he moved to Los Angeles six years

later. From a creative family, Logan had his first acting class at 12 and loved it despite initial hesitation. He found an agent and started booking roles the next year. "I kind of snuck in through the modeling entrance," Logan jokes, "And crept toward the theatrical department." His earliest jobs were commercials, where he learned about the casting process and became more comfortable in auditions. As a young teenager, Logan landed recurring roles in children's

shows like Nickelodeon's *The Thundermans* and Amazon's *Gortimer Gibbon's Life on Normal Street*.

At age 17, Logan booked the part that would change his life: joining the cast of *This Is Us* in 2016. At first, he was billed as a guest star, and only a few episodes had aired, so he didn't anticipate how influential the show would be to his life and career. "Milo [Ventimiglia] did, but we didn't believe him," Logan recalls. Upon meeting Logan and his television sib-

lings, Niles Fitch and Hannah Zeile, Milo implied that the trio would be part of the *This Is Us* family for years to come. When Logan was promoted to a series regular, he realized Milo's welcome had been genuine.

Because of the drama's popularity, *This Is Us* scripts come with intense non-disclosure agreements. As the show has progressed, the pressure to keep secrets has amplified. A limited number of copies are printed, which are then hand-delivered to the

cast. It's exciting to be part of such an important show, Logan remarks, but that comes with responsibility. "I could ruin my whole career if I wanted to," he laughs.

Embodying Kevin Pearson is a challenging task for such a young actor, but Logan has embraced it wholeheartedly. The show relies on a complicated series of flashbacks to tell a story spanning decades, meaning Logan must balance Justin Hartley's performance as an adult Kevin with his own while still giving a unique perspective to the character. "It's a line that you have to toe," Logan comments.

At first, he would prepare by watching Justin act. "I looked at his mannerisms a little bit, studied what he was doing, brought that into it, and then just let it go," he says. While the portrayals need to be similar, it is equally important that Logan make Kevin his own. "People are actually so different in these times of their lives," Logan mentions, which allows for more creative freedom. So far, Logan feels his portrayal of Kevin "seems to manifest pretty well" with viewers. "The writers are very confident with cutting back and forth between us, which I think is really cool," he adds.

The material is often very heavy, but Logan views it as an opportunity to excel. "You get a shot to step up to the plate," Logan says. "What else could I really ask for as an actor?" When a script is especially daunting, the cast and writers support and encourage him. Although he loves the challenges his character provides, Logan's favorite episode of Season 2 to shoot was the twelfth because it was "one of the first times that I've been able to be — not funny — but not be crying."

Not only has the show developed Logan as an actor, he has also learned about camera angles and lenses from director Ken Olin. Understanding that the takes can have nothing to do with you "gives you a lot more freedom," Logan states. "[Directors] like options, they like when you give your own input and ideas" during filming, he adds. Logan has also used his experience behind the camera in a supernatural short-form project called "The Relic" that he is co-directing and writing with friends.

As a child, Logan loved to learn and always expected to attend college, but with the takeoff of *This Is Us*, he was tied down after graduation. "I was the kid out of all of my friend groups that would do the [school-work] and never ended up using it, which was really funny," he remarks. But Logan has not given up his dream of higher education and hopes to enroll full-time once his tenure on the show is over. "I'd like to sit down and take some writing classes and English literature classes and then apply that to film," Logan says.

The show's dual narrative means Logan only works with one subsection of the cast. It can be difficult to see the other actors, he mentions, adding that "I wish that we could all be in the same scenes." The smaller cast size allows for closer bonds, so the on-screen Pearsons have become like family in real life. Logan is extremely close with Niles and Hannah as well as Milo and Mandy Moore, who play his parents on the show. He attributes the cast's intimacy to "the emotional journey that you go on" during especially raw scenes. "There's definitely a special connection I think that we'll always have because of what we do on the show," he remarks. ❧