

back to scool

class is in session again  
for the stars of *community*.  
luckily, gillian jacobs  
still has time for a few  
extracurriculars. by dan crane.  
photographed by ted emmons

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jacket by sachin  
& babi, bikini  
by eres, jeans by  
diesel, sunglasses  
by morgenthal fred-  
ricks, pink bangles  
by alexis bittar,  
gold bracelets by  
jennifer fisher.



GILLIAN JACOBS is perched on a stool at a coffee bar in the Grand Central Market in downtown Los Angeles. She's bundled up in a fitted gray peacoat (it's 50-something degrees, freezing by L.A. standards), and her high cheekbones and gorgeous blue-green eyes make her a bit intimidating. Fortunately, as I'll soon find out, Jacobs is both very charming, and—much like the television character that's made her famous—endearingly awkward.

Jacobs plays the dorky, liberal-minded buzzkill Britta Perry on NBC's *Community*, which returned—much to the delight of its ardent fan base—for a fifth season last month. The show also recently started airing in syndication, which Jacobs hopes will boost ratings. "A lot of people are like, 'Oh yeah, I've heard that's good,' but they've never seen it. It's that show their friend is talking about all the time, but they've never watched," she says. "Hopefully they'll be flipping channels some time and come across it."

Diehard *Community* fans are surely celebrating the return of creator and

showrunner Dan Harmon, who was fired after season three amidst a well-publicized controversy involving cast member Chevy Chase's angry voicemails, which Harmon played publicly at his live comedy night, Harmontown. It also didn't help that Harmon led the cast and crew in chanting expletives about Chase at the season three wrap party and developed a reputation for erratic on-

set behavior. Though Chase is no longer part of the ensemble cast, and Donald Glover only appears in the first five episodes, Jacobs says the show is newly refocused, and that this season's episodes are among the best they've done.

"You don't realize quite how special something is until it goes away," says Jacobs, regarding Harmon's return to *Community*. "Good TV is like lightning in a bottle. I think we're all relishing these 13 episodes and trying to do *everything*, because you don't know how many chances you'll get."

In addition to her work on *Community*, the Juilliard-trained actress has landed roles in a slew of upcoming films, including the sequel to *Hot Tub Time Machine* and *The Lookalike* with Justin Long. Last fall, she starred alongside Ken Marino in the indie oddity *Bad Milo*, about "a demon that comes out of his butt to kill people who

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~~she~~ she was a gay man."



stylist: [sean knight](#). hair: [luke chamberlain](#) at [starworks artists](#). makeup: [steve sollitto](#) at [starworks artists](#). shot at [the dream factory](#), los angeles.

jacket by [yves salomon](#), bikini by [eres](#), pants by [tommy hilfiger](#), all jewelry by [jennifer fisher](#), brooch by [alexis bittar](#), sunglasses by [linda farrow](#).

stress him out." Needless to say, it was a unique project for Jacobs. "The puppet they built to play the demon was so cute and disturbing and terrifying," she says. "You always want a new, different experience. How often do you get to work with a butt demon puppet?"

In April, Jacobs can be seen in *Walk of Shame*, a comedy of errors in which a news anchor (Elizabeth Banks) gets lost in L.A. after a drunken one-night stand. Jacobs plays one of Banks's friends in this female version of the 1985 Scorsese comedy, *After Hours*—or as Jacobs describes it, "an adult *Adventures in Babysitting*," a film she's shocked I've never seen. "You were obviously never a little girl," she chides.

Growing up in Pittsburgh, Jacobs says she was a gawky outcast. "I didn't have friends; nobody else was interested in the things I was interested in," she says. "I had an easier time talking to adults than I did kids my own age." Her mother began taking her to see Shakespeare and classical theater early on, and she was soon hooked, landing her first role at the Pittsburgh Playhouse at eight years old.

Her childhood obsessions reflected her theater upbringing: old movies, Cole Porter, and Katharine Hepburn biographies. "I think to this day I'm a woman who wishes she was a gay man," she jokes. "I feel lucky that I didn't know a time that I didn't know gay men and women. Growing up in the theater, it's a fact of life. I was really lucky to be friends with a lot of amazing adults when I was a kid, who introduced me to a lot of great things about culture that other kids my age weren't necessarily learning about."

These days, Jacobs's life is fairly tame, especially by Hollywood standards; she

doesn't drink and likes to go to bed early, though, thanks to social media, she does occasionally find herself the recipient of X-rated tweets, an occupational hazard she's getting used to. "I wanted to get into this crazy profession," she says matter-of-factly, "so I have to take my lumps when it comes to the stranger aspects." Her

preferred coping mechanism, as it turns out, is to immediately forward any weird communiqué she receives to her *Community* co-star, Ken Jeong. "It's not continuous," she says, "but every so often you get something and it's like, 'Holy lord! Email Ken Jeong!' I don't know why. I just do that."

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