

Rupert Everett confirms boycott of Sochi Winter Olympics



Yesterday, at the 2013 Edinburgh International Book Festival, actor Rupert Everett revealed that he will boycott the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics in Russia along with Stephen Fry. Citing the Russian attitude to homosexuality as 'cruel' he went on to add "if you are gay in Russia you live secretly. If found out you're beaten up, killed or forced to commit suicide".

Everett, who spent a year and a half in Russia shooting a movie and later returned as an UN ambassador, spoke about his visit to an aids clinic in St Petersburg where he discovered that gay people pretend to be drug users to get access to HIV medicine. He questioned whether the prejudice still exists because religion is powerful in the country. Russia recently announced an anti gay law which states that openly gay people and athletes attending the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics will be arrested.

Everett also made his opinion on the upcoming Scottish Independence referendum quite clear, when he said 'The United Kingdom is very lucky, it's a shame to be squabbling about things like Independence'.

In an engaging and witty session where Sean Penn's private parts were mentioned on several occasions, Everett confirmed that in 2014 he will be shooting what might be his greatest achievement in a biopic of Oscar Wilde's final years. The film, *The Happy Prince*, written, directed and starring Everett, has taken years to get off the ground. It was the success of Rupert's portrayal of Oscar Wilde in David Hare's theatre production, *The Judas Kiss*, that sealed the deal with

financial backers the BBC and British distributors, Lion's Gate.

Within the hour Everett admitted to bidding for and not securing the role of *Dr Who*, that he was forced to sell his French home due to lack of finances and that he has no regrets in his career, including being openly gay, commenting 'Life's too short for regret, we're only happy hookers'.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival continues until Monday 26 August. Full details of the programme and all tickets can be found at www.edbookfest.co.uk.