

Interview Collection Part 1

Vin Interview

June 17, 2001

BY CINDY PEARLMAN

LOS ANGELES--If you ran into him on a dark street, you might run the other way. Big, bald and brooding, Vin Diesel also has a gravelly voice that sounds the cars he revs up in "The Fast and the Furious," opening Friday.

In person, the only thing soft about him is the puppy he's holding in his arms. **"He's a deadly, deadly dog,"** says Diesel as his 10-week-old gray Canecorso named Roman licks his master's toes. But it's the movie star, not the furball, who lets out a wail after four questions concerning the canine.

"Why is he getting more publicity than me? He's stealing the show!" Diesel cries.

The big lug who starred in "Saving Private Ryan" (1998) and "Pitch Black" (2000) really shouldn't fret. His career is on a fast and furious track.

That's why on a blazing hot morning, Diesel, 33, is on the Universal lot to talk about his summer drag racing movie. The former New York bouncer looks every bit like some famous movie star's body guard as he strolls around in khaki cargo pants, a white tank top that shows his popping muscles and tough guy shades.

In "The Fast and the Furious," Diesel plays Dominic Toretto, drag race king of L.A., who might also be hijacking trucks to steal VCRs and stereos with his gang of car enthusiasts, who include hot teens Paul Walker ("Skulls") and Michelle Rodriguez ("Girlfight").

Director Rob Cohen says, *"Our producer Neil Moritz had seen 'Pitch Black' and he was rabid to put Vin in this movie. But I wondered, 'Is he too big to fit in the cars. Will he look like a 20-year-old on a tricycle?' But then I met with Vin and he convinced me that this group of drag racers needed a strong leader."*

Diesel was a leader in Las Vegas, where everyone went to driving school. **"Oh man, it was wheelies in a parking lot. Going 90 mph in muscle cars,"** Diesel says. **"It was every 14-year-old boy's dream come true."**

Making it work wasn't easy for Diesel, who grew up in New York. He was born to a black father and white mother. **"I never knew my biological father,"** says Diesel, who was reared by his stepfather, who taught theater, and his mother, an astrologist. **"I consider myself truly multiracial because my stepfather was also black. He is the one who culturally made me who I am."**

He also got his stepson into acting. Diesel dropped out of college to make a short film, "Multi-Facial," which he paid for with his nightly bouncer work. **"I wasn't coordinated enough to be a waiter,"** admits Diesel. **"Bouncing kept my days free for auditions and my movie. It catered to an artistic life I felt I was failing miserably in."**

Diesel says his stepfather made him finish "Multi-Facial," which was screened at Cannes in 1995. That led to a big break when Steven Spielberg called. **"He told me, 'Vin, I'm writing a role for you in 'Saving Private Ryan,'"** Diesel says. **"It was a Saturday morning and I started screaming in my head. He's saying, 'I saw 'Multi-Facial' and I loved it.' I'm like, 'Are you sure you watched the film? My film? You have the right number?'"**

For his part, Diesel says he only cares about the acting. **"For me the real motivation is the craft,"** he says. **"I'm married to the art."**

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MSN Live Chat (18/06/2001)

DishDiva says: Welcome to MSN Live! Tonight we are pleased to present Vin Diesel who stars in the new film, "The Fast and the Furious."

DishDiva says: Vin, it's great to see you again! Welcome back to MSN!

Vin_Diesel_Live says: Hello! I'm glad you could all join me again.

DishDiva says: Vin, your new film is chock full of fast cars and beautiful women. It doesn't get much better than that, does it? I know we'll be seeing your new film, "The Fast and the Furious" this

summer. What are you doing this summer?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: It's up in the air, it could be one of many different projects. I'll probably be in pre-production with one film or another. OR, if I can, I'd like to escape to Europe, maybe go backpacking.

DishDiva says: Any place in Europe you like to venture to the most?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I just want to totally be free. Just get that Eurail pass.

MTrinity76 in Onstage2 asks: Are you afraid of being type-casted as an action hero?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: No. Not that it's the worst thing in the world, but I will do a role that is on an independent role that is grittier like "Knockaround Guys" in addition to my current role. Something I have to be watchful for. I go after roles that are attractive and then look at the genre second.

DishDiva says: Vin, some pretty steamy love scenes in your new film. Let's see what the audience has to say about that.

Guest_venkit in Onstage2 asks: If you weren't nervous about the love scene, what made it easier for you.
Vin_Diesel_Live says: With Michelle, it's easier because we created a relationship, we didn't shoot that the first day we met. We created a relationship that would support that relationship on film. We got comfortable with each other before the big set up on that day. That scene wasn't even scripted, it came from the chemistry evidently interesting, I guess. That's how that whole scene happened.

Shooter_Girl_09 in Onstage3 asks: Do you do your own stunts?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I try to do my own stunts. Every scene in the movie, I shot a take and then the stunt would take a few takes. However, even though we did do some of our own stunts, it probably wasn't the smartest thing. We thought they were dangerous, but at the end of the day, the stunt men were able to do the impossible. Like flipping a car, or a car going underneath a semi, they were all done by incredible drivers.

DishDiva says: Vin, we have lots of audience questions about your new film, "The Fast and the Furious."

layna_3 in Onstage3 asks: What was the most exciting thing about learning to do racing stunts?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: The racing school was fun, but the stunt rehearsal was FUN. We did that in the parkinglot at Dodger Stadium, doing donuts, 180's and skidding out, that was fun.

Diamond1380 in Onstage5 asks: Did you get hurt at all doing the stunts?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: No. Aside from a few scratches, I think I was pretty lucky, I walked away from the film injury free. Those guys are pretty on the ball.

chrissyk33 in Onstage6 asks: Are you ever scared that you may lose touch with yourself with all the attention and fame you receiving now?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I think that I am fortunate that the people around me are very real. And my friends are friends I've had for many many years and that's one way to keep your feet on the ground. Ironically, the more fame, per say, I come into, the more introverted I become. So I'm not really worried about that. I'm driven by the work, I like being an artist rather than a celebrity.

SugarBaby_867 in Onstage5 asks: Have you and Paul Walker become good friends after starring in this movie together?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: Yes.

Lovely_Nicky_2 in Onstage6 asks: What kind of films do you want to do now?

DishDiva says: Would you do romantic comedy? Comedy?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I'm open to any kind of film. I'm driven by the story and the character, those are the things that are important to me. So if the story is good and the role is good, that's where I start. But yeah, I would love to do a romantic comedy.

DishDiva says: I'd like to see you in a romantic comedy.

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I'm dying to do a romantic comedy, so when that perfect script comes along, I'd be happy to do it.

DishDiva says: Vin, you see like you are really enjoying this chat.

Vin_Diesel_Live says: There is something appealing to me about doing chats, it's not one journalist asking questions, it's the people that get it. These people that create amazing web pages and send in great letters, and send in questions that I can answer, rather than what a journalist deems worthy. Here I can answer questions that the public want to know.

Xenia179 in Onstage3 asks: The '69 Charger really fits you, do you own any muscle cars?

DishDiva says: The producers didn't give it to you?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I used to own a '67 Pontiac, but I'm looking into trying to get that Charger.

Lovely_Nicky_2 in Onstage6 asks: Are you married?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: No, not even close

MTrinity76 in Onstage2 asks: Was there ever a time you were self conscious or unsure of your abilities as an actor?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: Oh yeah! Are you kidding me? Absolutely! I wouldn't be where I am today if I didn't second guess myself. When you're unemployed for 10 years, you have to wonder. You step back, and come up with a new strategy, and when that doesn't work, find a new strategy. There were times that there was no call back, even auditioning for a school and not getting it. Not getting that positive feedback, especially when someone doesn't get to see your work. When you're a musician, you can let people hear your songs, but when you're an actor, how do you show a movie you've made. You have to go with your gut feeling at the end of the day.

BeOne4 in Onstage5 asks: What would be doing right now if you weren't an actor?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I don't know. I've been asked that question and I answer differently depending on what mode I'm in. I've always had great relationships with my principals in my schools and I always thought if I could be a principal. I could whip those little kids in shape. Maybe something in the school system, or the legal system. I would just be content being on the rise and having my dreams. So it was never like "if this acting thing doesn't work out" even when I did say it, I would overrule it. This is the only thing I know how to do. The only thing I feel natural doing.

DishDiva says: It's obvious you have a great time in your films.

Vin_Diesel_Live says: Thank you. I do it because it feels right, like what I'm supposed to be doing. I remember being really young and my father would always be around other playwrights, and actors and I remember thinking "if you have to act, don't do it" because they weren't living extravegant lives, I could have worked for the city and made more money, so they would say "If you don't have to do it, don't do it, but if you HAVE to do it..."

CherryMoon13 in Onstage2 asks: All us girls want to know. . .Are you dating anyone? Is there anyone in the business who calls your attention?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: No, I'm not dating anyone. I wish I was. I'm gonna have to find a way to not work as much and get my head out of the work mode, so I can open myself up and make myself more receptive. I've been a little bit of a workaholic. But now, I hate to dispel all myths, but I'm not going out with anyone.

DishDiva says: So the Playboy playmate rumor isn't true?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: There is something very entertaining in hearing who I do go out with. (laughs) If I'm not writing, spitballing ideas, criticing a script, playing Playstation, then the guys can get all together and we can compare rumors and get a kick out of it. You have to be really cautious in what you believe. Sometimes they are talking about who someone is dating, but you might have only been seen with them in a club. Sometimes the internet will give you false information, and it's not just the internet, I will read in an industry magazine that I'm doing a script that I haven't even read yet. You have to be careful what you read. My mother even said, there was an article in Time Out, New York, that just had a misprint that said I did "Saving Private Ryan" before I directed "Strays" and that's just not true. People in the industry say "take it with a grain of salt." So my warning for people is you'll probably find the most accurate things about a person in these chats because they are answering real question Someone can ask if I'm doing a film like "Cowboys" and I like the comic book, but I've never read the script. It's just one of those things. For those people that are tapping into what I'm doing, be cautious about that stuff, ya know.

Naughty__Chic in Onstage3 asks: Vin, you seem pretty hot now in Hollywood. Are you satisfied with your carrer now?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I think I kind of don't look at it like that. I look at it like, I've always been grateful for what I've been doing, even when I had to put money together for a short film, that was gratifying. Satisfied, might not be the right word, there is gratification in everything I do and if I can't find that gratification, it's not worth doing. Some people get hot in Hollywood, but it should be about the work, and if you give it up to someone else, then your happiness depends on whether someone else thinks you are hot. For me, I have to do my work, I have to be artistic. There were many gratifying points in my life, like being accepted to Sundance. And "Multifacial" seeing that in 1994. That was paramount in my career. You have to appreciate it all through the times, not just when it seems to be enjoyed by the public. You have to enjoy the adventure and the ride.

Guest_beatkay in Onstage1 asks: Do you prefer writing alone or having a co-writer to bounce things off of? (Excuse prepositional phrasing there please.)

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I used to write alone. It's hard for me to a lot time for me to write now. I might be swaying to writing with a co-writer, if for nothing else, it a lots time and you can make it a socail experience. And you have someone to check your ideas and can check theirs. There's always cross-referencing. The writers will have to be compatible, and if they can come together on the story they are trying to tell, I think it becomes a very productive situation.

wil_d_s_c in Onstage3 asks: My mom wants to know if you are really Vin Diesel or just his secretary?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: That's a good question, but tell your mother if she reads any of my other interviews, she'll see how disjointed I am in my delivery and how 'all over the place' I am and how consistent my answers are in nature, and no one says "am I making sense" as much as I do. If this was a secretary, that she would be doing such a great job answering these questions, it wouldn't matter, because she'd be giving you all the right answers. The long way around it, the shorter answer is, tell your mom, rest assure, this is nothing but Vin

Meiwilli in Onstage5 asks: What, besides acting, has been your greatest joy in life?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I enjoy being by myself and being around nature. I like being peaceful. I guess I get a lot of joy from the various kids in my life. I don't have kids, and I get a lot of joy from my nieces and nephews. I've always been a sucker for kids. I remember when my little sister was in Kindergarten and I would go put on puppet shows for her school, I was like 10 years old, that would always make me feel good.

rapperjimmy0 in Onstage2 asks: What is your favorite scene in "The Fast and the Furious."

Vin_Diesel_Live says: The Shrine scene.

weesh21 in Onstage4 asks: Do any of the characters you have played reflect on your personality or attitude?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: Absolutely! Every character I've had I've tried to make some relation, I've tried to bring out some similarities, or find similarities in my personality. In "Pitch Black" it was someone being picked on and comes shinging through in the end. I identify with that. Also getting caught up in a capitalistic society that thinks we should just be making money, then there's more, and that little bit more is "Boiler Room." And "Saving Private Ryan" being expected to be a character and then perplexed that he couldn't save a little girl's life. So perplexed that his judgement is at stake. I indentify with the Dominic character in many ways. I think you have to, I don't think you have to find characters that are you, but maybe have one trate that you can find, or somewhat understand. Because if you don't understand the character, no one else will understand the character. It's like with writing, if you don't like what you're writing, then no one else will like it.

DishDiva says: Vin, we have a lot of questions about your sign. What sign are you?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I'm a Cancer.

DishDiva says: Do you think you live up to the Cancer personality?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I'm a Cancer, but there are other factors. If you ask an astrologist, they'll always ask you what your rising sign is. I believe that's what you show the world, the characteristics you show to the world and my rising sign in Scorpio. And my sun sign is Cancer, the more sensitive stuff that I keep protected by Scorpio. My mom will probably call me and tell me that I'm all wrong. (laughs) Now that I'm trying to talk about astrology, like I know something, now I'm going to have to hide this chat room from my mother. (laughs)

DishDiva says: Vin, I know you have the premiere tonight. Best of luck tonight and this weekend. Any final thoughts for your fans before you head out?

Vin_Diesel_Live says: I hope that you enjoy the movie. Thanks for chatting!

DishDiva says: For more on your favorite films, check out MSN Entertainment at entertainment.msn.com

DishDiva says: Good night everyone!

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Eonline Q&A

Hollywood's new antihero on romance rumors, keeping it real and his Fast and Furious road to stardom

by Anderson Jones | June 19, 2001
interview taken from E! online

It's every actor's dream: Steven Spielberg plucks you from obscurity and writes a role just for you in his next blockbuster.

For Vin Diesel, that's how it really went down. After screening Multi-Facial, a short Diesel wrote, produced, directed and starred in, Spielberg created a part for him in his WWII epic Saving Private Ryan. That character, Private Adrian Caparzo, introduced Diesel to audiences as a versatile, convincing actor.

Not that he wasn't prepared for it. Diesel started early, appearing onstage at age seven in a Greenwich Village theater company. He went on to do Multi-Facial and the full-length feature Strays before landing Ryan. Then came a breakout role in Pitch Black, as a convict-turned-hero in a skintight black tank top. This

August, he plays a wannabe mobster in Knockaround Guys (alongside Dennis Hopper); next March, he appears in F. Gary Gray's Diablo.

But first, he's putting his career on the fast track as Dominic, a street-racing baddie with a need for speed, in The Fast and the Furious.

Your costar Paul Walker really took this street-racing thing to heart, importing a \$65,000 car from Japan. Did it get under your skin in the same way?

No, not me. First of all, I'm a New Yorker. Also, I went directly from The Fast and the Furious to Diablo. I had to cleanse myself of the Dominic character to adopt Sean Vetter...There was no time to bask in that world. One of the best things about this business is that you get to have these little miniature lives.

You've always been mysterious about your ethnic background. Is that intentional?

Yeah. Because I want to you come see my movies. In this movie, I'm of Cuban descent.

Really?

It's interlaced there. It's super-super-subtle. We don't have to be clichéd. Just because he's of Cuban descent, we don't have to incorporate all the stereotypes.

In Knockaround Guys, I play a Jewish gangster with a Star of David tattooed on my arm. I'm an urban hero for Pitch Black. My point is, I've been lucky to play all these characters. And I don't hit people over the head with tons of stereotypes to play them.

You've moved effortlessly from something heavy and prestigious to popcorn action flicks. Did you ever think, I'm only doing movies like Saving Private Ryan?

I'm not that guy. I'm not that pretentious. I grew up in New York with this theater thing. I grew up with more integrity than I needed. I grew up in an artists' community, where everyone did art for the sake of art. I think that out in L.A., people try to [choose roles] in a pretentious way. That's not my rhythm.

I also approach all the films I do with equal conviction. That's what people respond to. I don't do Saving Private Ryan and say, "This is a prestigious film; I'm going to act differently." If you see my work, I hope you get that, regardless of the dressing...I'm bringing real shit to the role. That's important to me. That's all I can do. And I think there's a place for films like The Fast and the Furious.

Do you think that realness is what audiences are responding to?

It's because I came into Pitch Black and didn't do the bubblegum sci-fi it could have been. I came into Pitch Black and I did real shit. I came into Pitch Black and treated it like a real film, with a real character who really had a place in our culture and represented something. You know, the Pitch Black character [Richard Riddick] represented anybody who's been ruled out or given up on.

In The Fast and the Furious, just as in Pitch Black, you play a bad guy--yet people are still rooting for you.

I've kind of been exploring this antihero thing and expanding on it. I do different variations, but I stay within that realm. I'm not really attracted to whitewashed heroes. I'm not really attracted to the picture-perfect, one-dimensional hero. I don't think we get anything from those guys, because they're so unrealistic that you alienate your audience, [so] they never hear what you're trying to say. I think that the flawed heroes are more attractive to me because they're easier to identify with. They're more modern-day mythology, hands down.

You've surely heard that people are looking to you to replace aging action stars like Ah-nuld and Stallone. But you're also replacing dated archetypes who dispatch bad guys with one-liners and kill 100 soldiers with one machine gun.

It's not a one-liner world anymore. The fact that Gladiator gets the critical acclaim it does and the Oscar tells you something. It's not Saving Private Ryan, but that says something about where we're at. Gladiator could have been a cheesy little film, but they approached it with more substance. Gladiator could have been Xena: Warrior Princess.

You have a huge Internet following; Yahoo! alone has 25 clubs devoted to you. Are you aware of that?

I am aware of it. The fan base I've been lucky enough to accumulate is made up of enlightened people. Just smart individuals. Every now and then, I read some fan mail, and these people can write better than me. They could be journalists. I read a piece of fan mail, and it sounds like an essay in Vanity Fair.

So, it's flattering that I'm connecting to people who are really conscious and know what they're talking about and aren't just saying, "You've got a hot body." To hear these people talk about my roles as though they're in a film class is incredibly flattering. It's good to know that people understand what you're doing.

There are also some rumors flying around. I think the press has you dating five different women right now.

And none of them is accurate. Because I'll tell you something: If I'm not playing Sony PlayStation or rereading a classic or watching a goddamned foreign film or watching porn (I'm joking about the porn), my friends and I get on the Internet and find out who I'm dating, and it's always hysterical. It's really very funny. It's too preposterous to fight. They've linked me up with people I've never met. I assume there's nothing I can do about that...But at this level, I guess it's almost flattering that people care enough to create shit like that.

Classics, eh? What's the last one you read?

I don't know if it's considered a classic. It's not Steinbeck or Miller or Faulkner or anything like that. It's J.R.R. Tolkein. Lord of the Rings.

So, you have a Lord of the Rings thing?

It's so bad. I used to play Dungeons & Dragons, and this is the closest I can get to it now.

Were you a D&D nerd?

I wasn't a nerd. I played with creative people. I played with potheads. There was always a bottle of whiskey at the table. One guy was a cop, and it was on my night off from bouncing at the Tunnel.

As you become more famous and life becomes less ordinary, is it harder to keep it real?

I admire the actors who have not fallen victim to celebrityhood too much. I admire those actors who have kept it about the work. I think I read somewhere that Harrison Ford said, If I talk too much about my private world, when you go to see my movies, you'll be thinking about my private world. You'll be thinking about my breakup. That's why Bill Clinton couldn't be an actor. The more I can keep it about my work and less about my private life--on any level--the easier it is for you to be entertained.

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Diesel burning up

Fast star eyes Terminator sequel

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

By LOUIS B. HOBSON-- Calgary Sun

HOLLYWOOD -- Vin Diesel is revving up his engines so he can finally move into the fast lane.

In *The Fast and the Furious* that opens Friday, Diesel stars as the head of an illegal street racing team, and will be seen later this summer in *Diablo* and *Knockaround Guys*.

Exciting as this may be, what lies ahead gives Diesel pause.

Universal Pictures is developing a series of films based on the character he played in the sci-fi thriller *Pitch Black* and he's being touted as a possible evil terminator in *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines*.

"There are moments when I am awed by the luck I've had, but it's all balanced by the struggle it took to get this far," says Diesel.

Raised in a housing project in New York's Greenwich Village, Diesel started acting when he was seven. "A couple my friends and I snuck into an old theatre in Manhattan with the idea of vandalizing it. This woman caught us. Instead of reporting us to the police she gave us a script to learn and paid us \$20 a week to be in plays."

This pleased Diesel's stepfather who was a theatre director in New York.

Diesel continued working on stage in off-Broadway and off-off-Broadway shows, gaining a great deal of experience, but making little money.

"When I was 19, I started working at a bouncer for several clubs. It was really the only work suitable for me. I had an imposing look and the right physique and was no co-ordinated enough to be a waiter."

During the day, Diesel would go to auditions and take acting classes and dream of the day he'd act in a movie.

Being a bouncer is a dangerous occupation. A friend of mine was shot and another guy was slit with a razor blade. I wanted out."

Diesel's exit card came in the form of two films he wrote, produced and acted in. The first was the autobiographical short film *Multi-Racial* and the second a feature drama called *Strays*.

Both films were hits on the festival circuit but neither made it into wide release.

"The people who needed to see my movies saw them. Steven Spielberg saw Multi-Facial and wrote the character of Private Carparzo in Saving Private Ryan for me." Though his character is the first of Tom Hanks' platoon to die, Hollywood got a glimpse of Diesel.

His imposing physique got him cast as the dangerous criminal Riddick in Pitch Black and his friendship with Matt Damon and Ben Affleck earned him a role as an illegal trader in Boiler Room.

"The movies opened on the same day. Pitch Black showed Hollywood that I could open a box-office movie and Boiler Room showed them I could act."

Diesel says it wasn't until the release of the Pitch Black DVD **"that audiences finally put a name to my face. They also clamoured for more of Riddick."**

The first of the possible three Pitch Black sequels will be called The Chronicles of Riddick. **"I see Riddick as a kind of Conan of the future or an Indiana Jones."**

Diesel has also been asked to write, act and possibly direct Doormen, a film based on his years as a bouncer.

Celebrity definitely has its perks, but it also has its drawbacks. **"People now demand to know things about me that threaten my art. I have to be as clean a slate as possible."**

"The less audiences know about you, the more they can believe in you as a character. Monica Lewinsky could never be an actress. She has way too much baggage. Right now, people don't have preconceived notions about who I am. That's the way I want it to remain."

This is the reason Diesel will not talk about his racial heritage, his twin brother Paul Vincent, a film editor, or his girlfriend, former Playboy playmate Summer Altice.

"You can ask all you want about those things but you won't get any answers."

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Who is this guy Vin Diesel, anyway?

From: Daily News Los Angeles
Wednesday, June 20, 2001
By Bob Strauss
Film Writer

Vin Diesel has used those oaklike arms of his for a number of tough assignments: playing fighting men in such movies as "Pitch Black," "Saving Private Ryan" and the new car-racing-and-crime opus "The Fast and the Furious"; making a struggling actor's living as a nightclub bouncer in his native New York City; even for writing a few of his own films. But now, what the beefy, bald-shaven actor really wants to do with those mighty limbs is embrace everything that he can. This is the kind of bruiser who attends interviews with his beloved, 3-month-old Cane Corso Mastiff, Roman (yes, there is a certain resemblance between the puglike pup and its master). As soon as he starts talking, you realize that Diesel is always in the market for a warm hug.

"It's funny; you see Vin and he's a big guy, looks like this real tough guy," notes friend and "Private Ryan" co-star Edward Burns. *"And he actually is a tough guy. But at the same time, he's the nicest, sweetest person; surprisingly sensitive, real tight with his family, loves his mom."*

"I don't think I'm more one than the other," says Diesel, 33, in a voice both raspily deep and almost femininely delicate. **"I think I'm a culmination of everything, just like you are. There are probably times when you're more competent than others, and times when you feel less confident than others. A good actor is able to draw upon that. I can be different things at different times. I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing -- it's sometimes confusing even for me -- but that's a complexity that's a part of me and I readily pull from it to whatever character I've committed to."**

"One thing that's so therapeutic about acting is that you can define the parameters of a character and be that for a few months. And the parameters are clear, unlike with myself where the parameters are never really clear."

The same might be said of Dominic Toretto, the outlaw street racer Diesel plays in "Furious." A king of L.A.'s underground import car scene, Dominic and his crew run the fastest "rice rockets" -- souped-up Hondas,

Toyotas and the like -- on the wee hours, outrun-the-cops circuit. His team might also be involved in a series of truck hijackings, which is what prompts undercover detective Brian O'Conner ("Varsity Blues' " Paul Walker) to infiltrate Dom's close-knit circle.

What O'Conner discovers, though, is a rough-and-tumble surrogate family of mech-heads, including Dom's real sister Mia (Jordana Brewster) and his driver girlfriend Letty ("Girlfight's" Michelle Rodriguez), over which the big guy presides with genuine love and personal commitment.

It's almost like Diesel was born to play this one.

"This is a guy who lives by his own code," says the actor, whose own set of principles has both enhanced his mystique and led to some controversy. **"There's something very consistent about Dominic, who lives outside of the law but has his own moral framework, which consists of many favorable and admirable attributes. He's honest, he's loyal, he's a caretaker. What's so unique about the role is that there's not necessarily a huge character arc; he's constantly juggling the different aspects of his nature."**

It takes one to know one. Diesel himself has a knack for keeping his image, at least, intriguingly up in the air. While claiming he wants to keep personal information secret in order to focus attention on his work, the methods employed -- unusual stage name, anecdotes of colorful exploits, carefully selected revelations about his past and family -- serve mainly to whet the public's appetite for more Vinfo.

What's with the name?

First, that name. **"I was born in a gas station,"** the actor jokes. What we do know is that he has a brother named Paul Vincent, a film editor, and that they come from a mixed-race family and never knew their biological father. Diesel's mother, an astrologist and psychologist, and his theater director stepdad raised their children in an arty, Greenwich Village environment. Vin, however, is the only one who followed the seemingly natural path of acting.

"I've always been a student of psychology, of the way people work. I think you need to be to create characters," he says of his mother's influence. **"As for astrology, I'm into it as much as the next person. I know how to do a solar chart, but I don't know how much I can pull and tell about your character."**

"I'm a Cancer, with a Scorpio rising."

Intimate. But why won't Diesel tell us who he really is?

"It's not that I'm reluctant," he explains, **"I'd just rather give you the inside on the film because, somewhere down the line, people can find out all that information but they might not find out my take on the current project. That seems more pertinent to me."**

"Also, I like to go into roles without being, y'know, Monica Lewinsky. Imagine Monica Lewinsky or President Clinton trying to do a film. I'm just saying that I do a better job if I'm only accepted as the role that I'm playing. But if I try to ride this celebrity thing ... It's flattering, to some degree, to have people ask you what your name is and where you're from, and a person can buy into that."

Diesel may claim not to be buying into the celebrity, but he sure knows how to sell himself. A onetime Hunter College English major, in 1995 he wrote and directed a short film, "Multifacial," about the trials of an aspiring actor, and the following year directed, produced and starred in the low-budget feature "Strays." The films caught Steven Spielberg's attention, and he ordered a role for Diesel written into his about-to-shoot war epic "Ryan."

While he's written a script about his bouncer days and executive produced the upcoming "Diablo," in which he stars as a DEA agent suffering a psychological breakdown, Diesel admits that any creative activity outside of acting comes hard. As for the main job, for years that was no piece of cake, either.

20-year failure

"It was rough in the beginning because I wasn't getting anything," the big guy explains, the painful memory still noticeable in his voice. **"I was a 20-year failure, on the score sheet anyway. I don't know why, though maybe for a lot of years I was so worried about the craft that I never thought about the strategy or the business. I come from this bohemian setting and I ignored the relevance of understanding the industry. I was just this guy in New York thinking of how to get that moment alive and how to be truthful. I spent 20 years trying to be truthful -- and unemployed."**

All that's changed is the unemployed part. But Diesel's commitment to his artistic honesty has sometimes set him at odds with the Hollywood way of doing things. Most notable was an incident involving the highly unnotable action thriller "Reindeer Games."

Following his short stint in "Ryan" and his acclaimed (but unseen) voicing of the animated "Iron Giant," Diesel was offered a two-picture deal by Miramax Films if he'd play an underwritten, third-string heavy in the poorly received Ben Affleck starrer.

Though he didn't like the part, the deal and a promise by director John Frankenheimer that he'd beef up the role brought Diesel to the film's location. But when, during rehearsals, Frankenheimer said that he was too busy to improve the role, Diesel decided to drop out of the picture before the situation got unhappier. When Premiere magazine reported on the film months later, Diesel was shocked to find himself characterized as an egocentric villain in the piece.

"I was inconsequential to the picture and thought I was leaving on good terms, that I did the right thing," Diesel explains. "Why should a director have an actor who doesn't want to do the role forced on him by the studio? It was unfair to Frankenheimer, and I was walking away from more money than I've ever seen, the whole deal. But Frankenheimer's ego was so bruised, he actually took the time to tell Premiere that he fired me. No director in the world would take time out to talk about firing a guy as insignificant as he thought I was."

Disturbing as the bad publicity was, the fact that Diesel received back-to-back critical acclaim -- for the sci-fi actioner "Pitch Black" and an unexpectedly touching dramatic turn in "The Boiler Room" -- the same month that "Reindeer" bombed at the box office proved the actor's instincts right.

Those two films also raised Diesel's profile in both the industry and on the Internet, where female-operated fan sites have been proliferating ever since.

No sex symbol

"He's so ugly, I kinda like him!" Diesel jokes, at his own expense, about the tone of his admirers' gushings. "I never thought of myself as a sex symbol, and it's the one claim that kind of makes me blush. It feels so bizarre because I've always been an extrovert, I've always worked to get any attention or admiration. So it's bizarre to be charged with these things without having to work for it. But it's very, VERY flattering."

The man is too humble. And we think maybe, just maybe, those sculpted granite -- but embraceable! -- arms might have earned some of that appeal.

"Kryptonics. Anyone that knows me knows I call 'em Kryptonics," Diesel says of the imposing appendages, which he has been mistakenly reported as nicknaming the Guns. "Why? I think because, when I was a kid, the Kryptonite wheels on skateboards were the phatest."

In the self-made universe of Vin Diesel, that explanation makes perfect sense.

Diesel Owes His Career to Persistence

From: Yahoo!
Wednesday June 20 12:02 PM ET
By DAVID GERMAIN, AP Movie Writer

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (AP) - Vin Diesel could be poster boy for all out-of-work actors who have thought about packing it in and joining the 9-to-5 set.

A stage actor who had trained in New York City theaters since childhood, Diesel came to Hollywood a decade ago at 23 expecting studios would clamor for his talent.

Instead, the muscular Diesel had to fall back on his skills as a nightclub bouncer to make ends meet.

"I came out here thinking, I'm a New York actor, this town's just going to eat it up, and I'm going to be working like crazy," said Diesel, 33, who stars as leader of a street-racing gang in "The Fast and the Furious"

"A year goes by, and I failed miserably. I can count the auditions on two hands. I went back to New York a complete failure. I had to regroup and strategize."

From that strategizing came "Multi-facial," a short film Diesel wrote, directed and starred in. It was shot in three days in 1994 for just \$3,000.

The film had a prestigious screening at the Cannes Film Festival, but its real payoff came in 1997, when Diesel returned to New York from the Sundance Film Festival, where his low-budget feature film "Strays"

had played.

"I got a phone call on Saturday morning," Diesel said in an interview at the venerable Hollywood hotel Chateau Marmont.

"My agent said that Steven Spielberg just saw 'Multi-facial' and loves it. That was enough for me. I don't know how much more she really needed to say to put me on cloud nine. I was ecstatic."

But there was more. Spielberg wanted Diesel in "Saving Private Ryan." Diesel's response: **"What's 'Saving Private Ryan'?"**

"She goes, 'Only the most anticipated film in the industry,'" Diesel said. "So I said, 'Sure, I'm game.'"

Months later, Diesel was in Europe playing Private Caparzo, the member of Tom Hanks' squad killed by a sniper. It was Diesel's first professional film job. It was his first big acting money. It was the first time he got health benefits.

"And that was after 20 some years of acting," Diesel said. "I was so happy to be going out there, going to Europe for three months to work with Steven Spielberg, who I always admired as a director and was going to be able to learn from. The reality is if he had asked me to come out there and give him coffee, I would have."

After "Saving Private Ryan," Diesel was hired to lend his resonant voice to the title character of the animated adventure "The Iron Giant." Next came a supporting part in the stock-market drama "Boiler Room." Then the lead as an escaped killer in last year's sci-fi horror flick, "Pitch Black," a role tailor-made for Diesel's rock-hard frame, piercing dark eyes and shaved skull.

In "The Fast and the Furious," Diesel plays Dominic Toretto, king of the Los Angeles street-racing scene. The film follows his uneasy friendship with a new kid on the block (Paul Walker), who turns out to be an undercover cop investigating a rash of truck hijackings.

Before filming, Diesel attended some illegal street races and came to understand what draws drivers to the sport.

"It's an opportunity to be competitive without gang warfare. It's a nighttime thing. I guess the fact that it's outside of the law makes it a little alluring, too," Diesel said.

While Diesel has mainly filled action roles so far, "Fast and the Furious" director Rob Cohen said the actor has the range to play subtle, serious parts.

"You can't typecast him. He's shown too many edges, too many shadings. Too much ability to turn on the heat and heart and muscle to say that he can only be in the Rambo school of films," Cohen said. "I believe we'll watch this guy win an Academy Award, and not for some action film but for something like 'Marty' or 'On the Waterfront.'"

Later this summer, Diesel co-stars with John Malkovich and Dennis Hopper in the gangster film "Knockaround Guys," and next year he stars in the drug thriller "Diablo."

Where would Diesel's career be if he had not made "Multi-facial"?

"That's a good question. Slightly unfair," Diesel said. "I don't know. But I do know it was the best thing I've ever done, the best move I ever made. That move came out of frustration."

In "Multi-facial," Diesel plays an aspiring actor trying to maintain a hopeful outlook amid endless rounds of failed auditions. Though it's a fictionalized film, Diesel drew on his own experiences.

"I used to say, 'If I'm not star by the time I'm 18, I'm going to quit the business,'" Diesel said. "Then I said, 'If I'm not a star by the time I'm 21, I'm out of this business.' Then it was 23, then I changed it to 25." In the end, his big break with Spielberg didn't come till Diesel was nearing 30.

Diesel, whose father taught theater and whose mother was an astrologer, got his start in acting at age 7. He and some friends had wandered into a theater and were messing around with the props when a woman there offered them \$20 a week to appear in a play that required children.

Years of stage work followed. Diesel studied English at Hunter College but dropped out after three years to pursue acting full time.

A turning point came after his failed first trip to Hollywood. As he reassessed his career, Diesel received a book - "Feature Filmmaking at Used-Car Prices" - as a Christmas present from his mother.

"I had been acting forever and exposed to the arts forever, and nothing was happening. I was just a guy at parties saying, 'I'm an actor.' No proof," Diesel said.

So he created his own proof with "Multi-facial" and later "Strays," which he wrote, directed and starred in. "Strays" cost just \$47,000, money Diesel raised working long hours as a telemarketer.

"That book was a very profound little gift," Diesel said. "Who knows how practical it was? But what I know is that it empowered me."

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Planet Q&A: Vin Diesel Shifts Into Overdrive

Interview by PlanetHollywood.com Special Correspondent Prairie Miller
Thursday, June 21, 2001

Keep your eye out for Vin Diesel. He's a man on the move, and not just because he's doing his superonic thing in one of those speedy cars revving up in *The Fast and the Furious*. A muscle-bound hunk with a name to distinctly match his movie, Diesel slowed down for just a bit to tell all to PlanetHollywood.com about the accompanying thrills and dangers of drag racing in *The Fast and the Furious*. Diesel, who will also be showing up soon in *Diablo* and *Knockaround Guys* and is rumored to be up for *Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines*, dropped hints about his follow-up to the movie that first made everybody pay attention, *Pitch Black*.

PLANET HOLLYWOOD: What are you up to in *The Fast and the Furious*?

VIN DIESEL: I play this character Dominic. He's the kind of guy who feels he has to be tough. It's how he survives, and how he protects his turf and the people around him that he cares about. So he's also got this side of him that is very sensitive, like towards his sister, who is played by Jordana Brewster. And this is a world and a culture in *The Fast and the Furious* that you haven't seen much of in movies before.

PH: How much were those fast cars a factor in you going for this movie?

VD: Speed and cars, that's always been something that has excited me. Especially when I was younger and crazier, I'd do stuff like that with cars myself. So I love the idea of speed, and that feeling of freedom it gives you.

PH: What was the scariest moment for you in *The Fast and the Furious*?

VD: It was when I was going like seventy miles an hour in this Civic. I was leaning all the way out of the car window, trying to reach over to another actor who was hanging on to a semi. And if I would have turned even a fraction of the steering wheel, I could have ran right into him. Like I should have just said, let's get that stunt guy in here.

PH: Close call. Your career has been moving along at quite a fast and furious rate too. What does that high speed rise to stardom feel like?

VD: It feels amazing, it just completely blows my mind. There are times when I'm simply in awe about how lucky I've been. It's like when something feels so good, you almost hesitate to feel too good about it. But the struggle you have to go through to come this far, pretty much balances it all out in the end.

Like the time I went out to California when I was twenty one, and thought that my New York credentials would be my ticket. I came back home a year later, all bummed out and feeling like a total failure. But I got through it all by taking other people's advice, you know, to just enjoy the process.

PH: What's the down side of fast-forward celebrity?

VD: Your private life pretty much disappears. People want to know everything about you all the time. If you're being watched like that, you have to be so careful about everything you do. And when you lose that privacy, that mystery you have with the characters you play also disappears.

You know, the less audiences know about you as a person, the more they can get lost in the character you're playing, and believe in your character. People don't know too much about who I am right now, and I'd like to keep it that way as much as possible.

PH: So I guess that means you're not going to be saying much today about that girlfriend of yours, Playboy playmate Summer Altice.

VD: You won't be getting any answers from me about that. But ask me all you want.

PH: Okay, how about that name of yours?

VD: Let's put it this way. It's not on the birth certificate. And that's all I'm gonna say.

PH: I get the idea. How did you find yourself in the world of show business?

VD: For me it's been like almost forever. I've been acting since I was seven years old. And it started out in a really strange way. I grew up in New York, and me and my friends snuck into this old theater there one day. We started tearing up the place.

We were caught. But instead of calling the police, this woman who caught us gave us a script to learn, and twenty dollars a week to be in some plays. I guess she was impressed by our talents!

After that, I just kind of fell into doing off Broadway. It gave me a lot of experience, but not much money. I remember saying to myself when I was eighteen, I'm making it by the time I'm twenty one, or I'm gonna forget about it.

Then when I was nineteen, I started getting jobs as bouncers in different clubs. That's something I just fell into naturally, because I seemed to have the right look and build for it. You know, I looked really imposing and tough.

So I never had a problem getting jobs like that. It was really the only work suitable for me then. And people fear you and respect you when you're a bouncer. So who knows, it may have helped in case I ever play a superhero! Plus, I had no aptitude for being a waiter like other actors, I'm totally uncoordinated! But being a bouncer is a really dangerous occupation. I had a friend who was shot on the job, and another was cut with a razor blade.

So I didn't want to be doing that for too long. But now it's like those days weren't for nothing, because they've asked me to come up with a movie about those years that I was a bouncer, and star in it too.

PH: How did you go from bouncing to acting in movies?

VD: Well, I would always keep auditioning during the day, when I wasn't working. And then I'd also take acting classes, and I'd just dream all the time about getting into movies one day. I also was writing a couple of films, *Strays* and *Multi-Racial*. I did everything, the producing and acting too. They made the rounds of festivals, including Sundance. And the right people fortunately got to see them.

After Steven Spielberg saw *Multi-Facial*, he wrote the character of Private Carparzo into *Saving Private Ryan*, for me to play. I didn't last too long in the movie, my character dies right away. But Hollywood did get a glimpse of Vin Diesel. Then *Pitch Black* and *Boiler Room* came along. Amazingly, both opened on the same day.

PH: Are you excited about those plans in the works for a Pitch Black sequel?

VD: I'm ready. Since the *Pitch Black* DVD came out, everybody wants to see my character Riddick up there on the screen again. I'm training right now for *Pitch Black 2*. David Hayter, who wrote *X-Men*, is writing the sequel, *The Chronicles of Riddick*. So I think Riddick is going places, I see that guy as like the Conan of the future. Who knows, maybe an Indiana Jones.

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Vin Diesel Kicks Ass

*We talk with the giant star of *The Fast and the Furious*.*

by
2001-06-23

Steven

Horn,

[IGN](#)

As silly as it seems now, I was a little bit nervous about meeting Vin Diesel. I mean, I was about to sit inches from probably the baddest mofo working in Hollywood today. Of course, my initial estimation of Diesel was based solely on *Pitch Black*'s Riddick character - easily one of the best and hardest sci-fi characters to roll down the pike in years. After spending part of a beautiful, sunny SoCal afternoon with Diesel though, my earlier nervousness seems laughable. Not only is the guy funny as hell, he's also very bright, engaging, courteous and extremely relaxed. Plus, he's built Tonka tough.

Diesel's road to Hollywood (which includes such perks as talking to IGN) didn't begin with *Boiler Room* or *Pitch Black* or even *Saving Private Ryan*. Vin was a student at Hunter College studying English and dropped out to pursue his dream of making a film. He cobbled together around \$3,000 and wrote, directed, and starred in *Multi-Facial*. The film eventually went on to play at the Cannes Film Festival and received a HUGE response.

Emboldened by his success with *Multi-Facial*, Diesel came to LA and partly through telemarketing raised enough cash for his second film, *Strays*. *Strays* was accepted to the Sundance Film Festival but didn't get

bought. BUT, it did catch the attention of one Steven Spielberg who called Diesel from the set of Amistad talking about his new project Saving Private Ryan. Vin was eventually cast in the film.

From there, Vin popped into a vocal role as the Iron Giant in Brad Bird's film of the same name. But it was his role as big-gunned Riddick in Pitch Black that got him the respect he deserves.

Now, Diesel is appearing as Dom in the first film to intelligently and respectfully feature full barrel street-racing: The Fast and the Furious. Opening this weekend, The Fast and the Furious further cements Vin's Hollywood cred and will hopefully enable him to make more of the stuff he digs.

Surrounded by the actual cars from the flick and at the end of a very long day, Diesel and I had a nice little chat...

IGN: Hey Vin, how's it going.

DIESEL: I feel great.

IGN: How did you get involved in The Fast and The Furious?

DIESEL: I had a conversation with [Director Rob Cohen]. He described that first racing scene and I was hooked.

IGN: Have you seen the film all the way through?

DIESEL: Yeah, I spent most of the time stomping my feet and clapping my hands!

IGN: One of the things you said in the roundtable was that acting is a therapeutic experience for you. How about writing? I know there are a lot of people who find writing to be therapeutic, but also maddening in a sense. Since you have training in both, I was wondering which do you get more pleasure from: writing or acting?

DIESEL: Pleasure? Ooo, I don't know...

IGN: OK, maybe not pleasure. But what do you look forward to the most?

DIESEL: Definitely not writing. I write more out of necessity. I'm not disciplined enough to be a writer consistently. I write when I have to. I usually help out a little with the writing of the script if I have to. I'm a perfectionist. I'm very critical, especially artistically. When I'm writing, I'm locking myself in a room. I'm the worst critic in the world. I write something and then I beat myself up. I'm like "Vin, you're retarded, that makes no sense."

IGN: Whereas acting you just show up...

DIESEL: No, acting you don't just show up...

IGN: I know. (please don't beat me up) You had some pretty explosive scenes in The Fast and the Furious where you just went off. Where does that come from? I try to get mad just driving around in traffic but it doesn't work. Where do you get that? Where do you get that fury?

DIESEL: That's a good question. That's in line with the therapy thing. Where it comes from, I'm not sure. I just know I have a large reserve to pull from. Maybe it's from internalizing some stuff, I don't know. I DO know that I can pull on it easily because I have a great reserve of extreme emotions.

IGN: Does it swing the other way too?

DIESEL: Of course, I don't act in an extreme fashion in my day to day life. I don't think any of us live do. I think we all have that reserve somewhere and we pull upon it when we need it.

IGN: One of the things that Rob Cohen has said about being a director and getting involved in a subculture like the one represented in The Fast and the Furious or his martial arts film Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story is the fact that - when the film is over - you have to leave that world behind. Door shut. This [street racing] subculture though seems so vibrant and colorful and young, wouldn't you still want to be a part of it, hanging out and stuff?

DIESEL: If I was at a place in my life were I could take on a new subculture or adopt a hobby readily ... but I went directly from The Fast and the Furious to Diablo. I had to cleanse myself of the dominant character and start preparing for the Sean Vetter character. So, for me, it was exactly like what Rob said. I literally left The Fast and the Furious and the day after started working on Diablo.

IGN: I understand you're a comic book fan.

Diesel: Big comic book fan. Grew up as an avid comic book reader and collector. I had all the plastic bagged comics and would spend the weekends re-organizing my collection.

IGN: Some people I've talked to want to know if you're going to be in Hellboy.

DIESEL: I love the Hellboy project, I'm a fan of the Hellboy comic but I don't know how far along they are. I haven't read a script yet. I've got to read a script before I would commit to anything.

IGN: Don't you think your interest would get it moving along?

DIESEL: Yes. Do you think I should do Hellboy?

IGN: Yeah. Dude with the hand. Join the Bureau.

DIESEL: I don't want this hand to get excited but if it does ... should I do Hellboy?

IGN: I think so. Comic book and videogame movies are so ... if they're done right. They're talking about [Guillermo] Del Toro.

DIESEL: For what?

IGN: For Hellboy.

DIESEL: I don't know.

IGN: When they are done right, like Batman, before they get turned into a ride ...

[Editor's Note: here Steven just kind of stumbles around like an idiot, talking smack about bad comic book films. It's painful.]

DIESEL: Hey man, I'm a fan of all that high-tech sci-fi stuff and if there's a way to put it into film I'm into it. Like I told you, I am a fan of that world. If someone were to come up with the right script, I'd be into it.

IGN: Other than Pitch Black you haven't done a hard sci-fi film before.

DIESEL: Just waiting for the sequel.

IGN: Is it going to be a sequel or a prequel?

DIESEL: A sequel - The Chronicles of Riddick.

IGN: What a great character though. I mean, quoting T.S. Eliot! Is Twohy going to do the sequel?

DIESEL: I don't know what's going to happen with it. Universal has it now and I'm waiting on a script. But they really want to make it this year. Triple the budget, go to town.

IGN: I was talking with a friend about the importance of a director's knowledge of effects right after The Mummy. There wasn't a shot that wasn't somehow washed through a computer. As a Director, how important is it to have a knowledge of special effects?

DIESEL: Nowadays, very important. Especially if you're directing a film of this nature or a sci-fi film or even films like Charlie's Angels which use some of The Matrix-style effects. Even the classic kung fu movie [genre] gets the treatment like with Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon.

IGN: Or a car chase film...

DIESEL: I think to compete in this arena, yeah. Unless you're doing Jerry Maguire ... even Forrest Gump has CGI. That's something you need to do when doing these types of films unless you're doing some non-linear stuff like Tarantino or Guy Ritchie, those other kind of cool movies ... character-based, edgy. That's what I love about doing a film like this with a Rob Cohen because you can be so involved in the story, in the character, and then know that there's going to be a calvary that comes in later to help you win the war. That's cool. It makes the movie-going experience fun for me. When I saw The Fast and the Furious, I was excited because there was so much art to it that I had no part in.

IGN: That brings up an interesting point too...

DIESEL: It's the same as on Pitch Black too. I mean when you see me going backwards on the muddy slope, I'm in heaven! So much of that movie, I'm like "God, that guy Riddick is such a bad motherf***er! Who the f*** is he?"

IGN: Nice. So you want to get back behind the camera anytime soon?

DIESEL: Eventually. I'm having fun right now, learning a great deal. I don't know s*** about the CGI stuff, special effects stuff, and I now have access to it, learning about it.

IGN: Would you ever do one of those Redford style things were you write, direct, produce, and star in a film? Would that be too much work?

DIESEL: I did do that. Under harsher conditions and with no money. Would I love to do it again? Absolutely!

Braveheart is a model I'd love to follow. That's what this is all about getting the bankability to do that. Let's say that Hellboy was my pet project that I always wanted to get made ... provided one has enough bankability, they can get those movies made.

IGN: Strike while the iron is hot...

DIESEL: You gotta keep it moving. You've got to keep working. You can't get lazy. But there's a flip-side to that. You can't saturate the market. I believe in paying special attention to every project that you do and supporting the projects you do. If you believe in the project, you have to support it. I love this film. At the end of the day, I love this film. It's a lot of fun.

IGN: It's a blast.

DIESEL: And why not support that and let other people know they'll be happy that they went to see this film, don't you think?

IGN: I'll be honest, I love action flicks. It's what I'm all about. But I couldn't really get riled up with this one until I saw it. My ass was in the seat the whole time. When I first walked in I was thinking it was going to be yet another car chase movie but man, it got me going. I'd definitely go see it again. It rocked.

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New Movie Fuels Vin Diesel's Career

Jun

25/01

by Dicker Ron Hartford Courant

Vin Diesel's IQ-injected machismo has made him one of the more intriguing actors around. His new hot-rod movie, "The Fast and the Furious," will only get him more attention.

What else could a man want?

Well, lunch for starters. Diesel sits in a chair on a Universal Studios back lot with the Southern California sun beating down on him. He watches cast mates converge on a buffet under a tent while he conducts yet another interview. His cane corso puppy, Roman, sniffs around the grass for scraps. None will be forthcoming until Diesel gets a break.

It is a minor inconvenience, really. Diesel, 33, waited more than 20 years to get recognized. What's another 20 minutes without shish kebab?

Diesel wears day-old stubble on his head and face, and his deltoids and biceps sprout from a thermal undershirt with the sleeves cut off. It is not exactly "Meet the Press" attire, but Diesel isn't selling himself as a full-on "mensch." Once a bouncer in New York City, Diesel has parlayed his swarthy looks, deep voice and animal energy into a burgeoning career as the tough guy who wrestles with right and wrong.

"We can identify with anti-heroes almost better than we can heroes," he says. "When we see a hero on screen, we think, 'We can never be that good.'"

In "The Fast and the Furious," his character, Toretto, soups up cars by day and races them on the streets of Los Angeles by night. An undercover cop (Paul Walker) suspects Toretto is hijacking trucks to finance his need for amphetamines, so he infiltrates Toretto's circle.

"The car aspect of this movie was fresh to me," he says. "I was always the person who would spend the money that I could spend on a car to make a movie."

The son of a drama teacher and astrologer, Diesel has acted most of his life.

He began bodybuilding to get the attention he was not getting onstage. That led to a minicareer as a velvet-rope sentinel at New York hotspots including Tunnel.

"My experience bouncing has liberated me," he says. "I don't have to be tough all the time. I don't have to live by that, like a rapper might have to, because I really did it, and I'm not a violent person by nature. I have all the strength in the world to protect my sensitivity."

Two recent films have given him more muscle in the industry. He played a stockbroker who recovers his conscience in "Boiler Room" and a psychopathic killer who tries to save fellow castaways in the modest sci-fi hit "Pitch Black." Two upcoming movies highlight his thug side. In "Knockaround Guys," he is one of four mob sons who converge on a small Montana town to retrieve a cache of money. In "Diablo," he portrays a newly anointed drug lord.

"Every character that I have, no matter how menacing he may appear to be, I try to layer it with colors," he says. "And usually somewhere in that character, you'll find a door to his innocence."

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Diesel powers ahead with brains and brawn

June

25

By

Miki

Turner

[Knight Ridder Newspapers](#)

LOS ANGELES - The sight of Vin Diesel in a muscle shirt, fatigues and sandals strolling around the Universal back lot with his adorable puppy was quite the Kodak moment. But it wasn't enough to convince the casual observer that "The Fast and the Furious" star was anything more than another buffed Arnold wannabe with a fondness for animals that look as if they'll grow up and chow down on any perpetrator on command.

It doesn't help matters that Diesel's adopted name (he won't reveal his real first name, but his real surname is Vincent) makes it difficult to take him seriously, or that there are at least half a dozen Web sites declaring how hot this New York City native is.

Even his love interest in "The Fast and the Furious," Michelle Rodriguez, was initially misled by her co-star's biceps-bigger-than-Montana appearance. "You look at him and he's all big and cocky," she says. But she found that he is "one of the most intelligent and nicest guys that I've ever met."

The real Vin Diesel is a 33-year-old college dropout and ex-bouncer who grew up in an artists' housing project in Greenwich Village. He's a stage-trained actor and self-taught filmmaker who has been making waves in Hollywood since producing the autobiographical film "Multifacial" in 1994. The film, which cost \$3,000 and was made in three days, won rave reviews at Cannes and paved the way for Diesel to make his directing debut in 1997's "Strays."

Since then, Diesel, who says he was "discovered" by Steven Spielberg, has been lauded for his acting skills after memorable performances in "Saving Private Ryan," "Boiler Room" and "Pitch Black" - his first leading role.

Diesel plays Dominic Toretto in "The Fast and the Furious," which opened Friday.

"I love the character," Diesel says. "I know he's described as anti-hero, but I don't necessarily know if this is an anti-hero. He lives outside of the law, but he has his own moral code, which consists of many admirable attributes. He's honest, he's loyal, he's a caretaker. He's the same guy in the beginning as he is in the end."

That statement pretty much describes Diesel, who says he's still the same dude who sacrificed money for art during his years as a struggling actor in New York and Los Angeles.

"I want to affect people," he says. "I want people to hear me in my work."

'Fast and Furious' Vin Diesel Speeds Over Hollywood's Color Line

Esther Iverem

BET.com Arts and Film Critic

He plays Italians, robots and sci-fi criminals. But the real question is, just how Black is Vin Diesel? Peep how this actor's multi-racial looks get him some of the roles Denzel, Wesley and others can't get.

Posted June 25, 2001

It was a big weekend for Vin Diesel. His new movie, "The Fast and Furious," took in an impressive \$41 million.

The first time you saw him in a big movie, he played a young, brave Italian in "Saving Private Ryan." And then in the next flick, "The Iron Giant," he performed behind the scenes as the basso, gravelly voice of the animated star.

Did you peep Diesel in "Pitch Black?"

But you're probably not sure what you were looking at. He seemed white enough to be Italian but Black enough in "Boiler Room" for the White boys to call him a nigger. And "Pitch Black" offered a long, close look at the 32-year-old native New Yorker. (And the looking isn't bad, ladies) That's not just a deep tan. Look at that nose and those lips. And maybe those Steven Spielberg folks knew how to work wonders with a razor and a combat helmet but the clincher here is the hair. It's not that crew-cut White boy fuzz on the sides. It's not that Puerto Rican curly-type thing. It's that close-cut grain, that fresh-from-the-corner-barbershop grain, that Vincent Carter grain, your brother's grain.

Diesel is living La Vida Multicultural, which, it turns out, might be the same as La Vida Loca.

"I've been presented with some interested offers-like to play a skinhead [in "American History X"] he says, sitting in a room at Washington, D.C.'s Four Seasons Hotel. "There's something cool about this kind of ambiguous, chameleon-like ethnicity. I try to think back to what actor has played all these different kinds of roles and I can't think of any, can you?"

"It's very fascinating," he adds. "A man of color is being exposed to so many different opportunities. Hopefully, it says something about my acting. Hopefully, ideally, that's what I want it to do."

Diesel was raised by artsy parents in New York. He doesn't like to get too specific about his background. He's Italian and a lot of other things. He's never met his biological father but was raised since the age of 1 by a Black stepfather.

"We're going to get to a place in our culture where I think there will be a lot more ambiguous people," he says, adding a quote here and there from Sidney Poitier or Martin Luther King, Jr. to reinforce his point. **"I've noticed that people feel comfortable with me or they feel uncomfortable with me. They either adopt me - whether it's any kind of nationality--Italian, Latin, Black or you name it. They either feel comfortable with me or don't feel comfortable with me."**

It's not like Diesel is trying to pass. Pass as what? Himself? He doesn't consider himself Black or White. He's in that multicultural zone. He rejects that "one-drop" rule of this country. When it comes to acting, he has had to sort of go White to be able to come back to being Black. Maybe one unanswered question is this: Once seen in this country as Black, can he go back?

A few years ago, he wrote, directed and starred in a funny and poignant film, "Multifacial," about a young actor of mixed-race heritage who goes about the task of auditioning for parts. At the first gig, he dons a hat (to hide that grain!?) and plays a Brooklyn (or New Jersey or Philly) thuggy Italian. At the next audition, he's rejected by a Black casting agent as "too light." Some other Black folks are looking for more of a "Wesley type." Then he plays a Latino, but gets caught ass-out when he can't speak Spanish. It goes on and on, ending, finally, with the young actor sitting in a diner where the White woman behind him orders a coffee that's "not too light, not too dark."

His own personal story picks up from there. Spielberg saw "Multifacial" and wrote a part for Diesel into his epic, award-winning film about World War II. Since then, opportunities have continued to come Diesel's way.

Of course, there is the matter of his name, He wasn't born Vin Diesel.

"Well the name is really simple," he says. "It's not the name on the birth certificate. Honestly, it's in line with how so many of my idols changed their name just a little bit, just enough to feel comfortable with where they are, to feel comfortable with how they're talked about."

"It's unnatural to have your name be that big, that larger than life," he adds. "There's a reason why so many actors, like Tom Cruise, why their names have been altered a bit. I think it gives you just a little breathing space. It doesn't put your whole history - like what hospital you were born at, the whole thing, on record."

It doesn't make your mom a public subject. It gives you a little space. And being an actor and having your name up on the screen or a big poster is a little impersonal in a way. Unless you're born Jesus Christ, you don't need your name that big."

Diesel grew up in Lower Manhattan with his sister, an artsy dad and a mom who worked as an astrologer. (He's a Cancer with Scorpio rising). His stepfather taught theater when he was young. He was riding his banana seat bicycle around one day with his friends when they decided to stop at old theater, go inside and start tearing up things.

A woman in the building stopped them and wound up giving him a part in a play about dinosaurs. And though he's plied other trades - like being a bouncer for 10 years at New York clubs like The Tunnel, 1018 and The Grand --- he's had the acting bug ever since. And, probably like every little boy back then riding banana seat bikes, he's always wanted to be an action star.

Well, this weekend Vin, (Or Vincent or Vinny or whatever your name is), you got it brother. Be an action star - in big, bold, living color.

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Vin Diesel Riding High On 'The Fast and the Furious'

Mike Cidoni
iKnowRochester
06/27/01

Hollywood - He is one of Hollywood's hottest, and biggest, rising stars. You've seen Vin Diesel in such films as 'Saving Private Ryan' and 'Pitch Black.' Now, see him in action.

*Hot guys, bodacious babes, fast cars. But star Vin Diesel agrees there's something more to **The Fast and the Furious**.*

Mike Cidoni: *It's a love story.*

Vin Diesel: It is very...I think you're dead-on. It definitely plays on that love-story level.

Cidoni: *You know, I'm only half-joking.*

Diesel: I'm being sincere. The relationships are all unique.

As is the film's blend of burnt rubber, street gangs and unlikely romance...all new, but also with an old-fashioned heart: think West Side Story.

Diesel: I mean, it's basically that same story -- that same *Romeo and Juliet* thing.

Cidoni: *I mean, it's perfect: we've got the stairway here, the bricks. All we're missing are the Sharks and the Jets.*

Diesel: Yes, let's go on the balcony...

Cidoni: *A little singing, a little dancing...I'd love to see you do that.*

Diesel: You may.

*We've previously seen Diesel as a grunt in **Saving Private Ryan**, an alien-fighter in **Pitch Black**. But he's got other dreams.*

Diesel: Looking for that musical-comedy.

Cidoni: *Listen, Hollywood: Vin Diesel, he wants to sing.*

Diesel: Vin Diesel wants to do a musical-comedy.

(Cidoni and Diesel laugh)

*'Til then, he provides the muscle to muscle-car in **The Fast and the Furious**.*

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Movies: Vin-dicated

June 28, 2001

The muscle-man star of 'The Fast and the Furious,' last weekend's surprise No. 1 movie, talks to NEWSWEEK's Devin Gordon about sudden fame, driving school and what he calls the true craft' of acting

By Devin Gordon
[NEWSWEEK](#) WEB EXCLUSIVE

June 28 - Vin Diesel is a very large man with several amusing little tics. When he answers a question he mashes his eyes shut, looking almost pained, as though if he doesn't get this sentence out, it'll eat his brain. He has 17 different laughs, including one growling, bombastic laugh-kind of like Gomez Addams-that comes out not when something is funny but rather when the time seems right for a loud noise.

HE ALSO CAN'T SIT STILL. Diesel has chosen a chair in the back corner of a Manhattan hotel restaurant (in part, he confesses, so he can survey the area and take note of any attractive women who might enter the room), and during our 60-minute interview, he will explore every possible way to sit in this chair. Arms splayed out against wall. Right arm cradling large, bald head against wall. One leg up, braced by wall. Leg crossed over knee. Leaning forward, elbow resting on knee. Repeat.

All of this is a long way of explaining that Vin Diesel, the muscular star of the summer's first true sleeper hit, "The Fast and the Furious," which rang up \$42 million in its opening weekend, is not your garden-variety action hero. He even appears at times to kind of, in a way, sort of resemble, well, a quirky actor. He's been at it since he was 7, at one point writing and directing his own short films when no one else would give him work. (That period lasted a good while; Diesel is 34.) At a film festival, Steven Spielberg caught one of Diesel's movies and cast the actor in "Saving Private Ryan." Since then he's played the voice of "The Iron Giant," a killer in the sleeper sci-fi hit "Pitch Black" and a smooth stockbroker in "Boiler Room." Now he's being touted as the heir to the Arnold Schwarzenegger legacy. Literally. Diesel is already in talks to star in "Terminator 3," playing the robot-killer role that Ah-nuld invented. "The Fast and the Furious," it should be stated, is not Diesel's finest hour as an actor. He's been asked to put honest-to-goodness feeling into lines like "I live my life a quarter-mile at a time." Not surprisingly, he fails. But even with a half-baked script, it's hard to take your eyes off of him. Or your ears. His voice is absurdly deep, the coolest to come along since James Earl Jones. NEWSWEEK's Devin Gordon had the distinct pleasure of listening to it for an hour. Didn't even matter what he said. (But here's what he said.)

NEWSWEEK: So what's your real name?

Vin Diesel: Ah, you do have to ask, right? And I have to say: Any other questions? [laughs]

It's just too perfect, that's all.

Well, sometimes life works itself out that way.

I've heard that the entire cast went to driving school to prepare for the movie. How was that?

We did it in Las Vegas, probably a bad place to do a 6 a.m. class of any kind. At 5:35 in the morning, I was still rolling. [pause] The dice. Rolling the dice. At the craps table. [He flicks his hand, like he's shooting dice.]

Don't worry, Vin, I'm following you.

You better put the hand gesture in your story. [laughs] Cuz "rolling" in Vegas could be many, many other things. But driving school was great. What it really does is make you more confident about driving at high speeds, which is probably bad.

Were you a big car buff before this film?

No, not really. Cuz I'm from New York. I could only race subways. People from Manhattan don't generally get into cars at an early age. I had a sports bike, like a motorcycle, so I would ride from home downtown to college every day. And then I'd open it up to 100 on the Jersey Turnpike and do all these crazy things that kids do. I would speed the second I got out of the city.

What other jobs have you had? I'm guessing that you were a bouncer at some point.

Nine years. Great way to keep your days free. I got to a point with acting where I had to sink or swim. I had to be proactive. More so than actors generally are. I had to write my own stuff because no one was hiring me. I had to become the director to hire me. You know, if you're a musician, you can make music. If you're a painter, you can paint. But as an actor, you are at the mercy of a screenwriter, a director, someone who will provide you with that canvas to be artistic. So in order to be a professional actor, I knew I had to create something.

Are people surprised to find out you've always been an actor and not some guy who got spotted in a gym?

Oh, yeah. Absolutely. It's only when they see my work-hopefully-that they realize I'm serious about this. But most people's first impression is that I'm, let's say, a guy with a limited appreciation for the true craft.

Are you worried about getting pigeonholed into action roles? I don't think you'll be getting too many

auditions with Merchant-Ivory.

You never know! [laughs] But sure, I do things like “Boiler Room ” to protect me from being stereotyped. Because, whether it ’s wrong or not, I enjoy playing action roles. I enjoy those larger-than-life characters. But not at the cost of respecting the true craft. I ’m an actor first. And then the physique comes into play. You know, Marlon Brando was accused of having a dominating physical presence when he began.

Why did you want to be an actor?

Maybe because I have an ambiguous identity. Acting has always been therapeutic to me. I always wanted to be recognized and validated as a kid. When you’re acting-truly assuming a character-you know exactly who you are, and that’s liberating. In the same way therapy is liberating.

Why was your identity ambiguous?

Who knows. Maybe because ... who knows.

OK, tell me about your family.

[Laughs] Any reason why my identity would be ambiguous, I would keep to myself. That’s just the way I am.

Fair enough. Tell me about your family.

[Laughs] I have a great family. I was lucky. Everyone in my family has a strong character. The content of their character is rich. My mother is an astrologist-

Really?

-with a masters in psychology, yeah. She kind of combines the two. One of the reasons I respect my father so much is that he taught theater before I arrived, and then had to abandon his dreams to raise a family. He had to get a real job, something that paid enough at least to feed us.

Did you have fun growing up?

I did. I had a magical time. My childhood was magical. Magical! I grew up in artist housing in downtown Manhattan. It was like a C.S. Lewis novel. There’d be a mother, 150 pounds overweight, sitting on a stoop, just watching all the kids on the street. At 6 years old, I was hustling, going into restaurants and asking if they’d let me wash dishes for a free order of fries. And free french fries was this huge deal! Free fries! I learned how to swim in the Carmine Street pool. I was the kid where the teacher would always say, “He ’s so talented but he doesn’t apply himself. He ’s distracted.”

You probably would ’ve been diagnosed with ADD today.

You know what? That ’s exactly what they would’ve done. It was pre-ADD, thank God. Pre-Ritalin. Pre-bulls-tremedies. But definitely, definitely, definitely, I would’ve been diagnosed with ADD. And rightfully so.

Are you still like that? Short attention span?

Oh, yeah. If a beautiful girl walks in this room, you will lose me momentarily. But I don ’t know if that’s ADD. [laughs]

In the past year, you ’ve become something of a celebrity. How has it changed you?

I used to be a lot more extroverted. I think with the transition of going from somebody who had to work for attention to someone who gets it uninvitedly now-that’s changed me. It’s made me, to some degree, more of a recluse.

Is that OK with you?

I don’t know that I have any say in the matter.

But you get to have an opinion about it.

Yeah, that ’s true. It’s surreal. The idea that people care about things that are so unimportant, that are so trivial.... It’s a weird reality for sure.

Last question. Can you still use your name at hotels?

I had to change it. Just recently. And I didn ’t want to! I didn’t want to! I resisted. Deliberately resisted. But now, it’ s just smarter. I’m looking forward to picking better names. Socrates. Freud. Albert Camus-and I ’ll pronounce it “kay-muss,”just to throw people off.

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Diesel Co-Scripting Pitch 2

Pitch Black star Vin Diesel told SCI FI Wire that he's co-writing the upcoming sequel with director David Twohy and that the new film will focus on his convict character. **"We should have a script in the next few weeks or month,"** Diesel said in an interview. **"It will be called The Chronicles of Riddick."**

Diesel confirmed that the sequel would not deal with the same aliens as the original film. **"It will not be another Pitch Black situation,"** Diesel said. **"We're going to follow Riddick through this universe, more like a futuristic Conan, coupled with a Harrison-Ford attitude and Star Wars. It's going to be dope."**

Diesel's character, Riddick, is an ex-convict in the future, with an eye condition that makes him vulnerable to light but able to see in the dark. In Pitch Black, Riddick used his ability to fend off a species of nocturnal aliens when his prison transport shuttle crash- landed.

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Late Night Show transcript

CRAIG: YOU KNOW OUR FIRST GUEST FROM "SAVING PRIVATE RYAN" AND "PITCH BLACK. " HIS NEW FILM "THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS" IS CURRENTLY THE NUMBER ONE MOVIE IN AMERICA. GO AHEAD! HOLD ON! LISTEN TO ME! COME BACK! WHOA! HELP ME! DOMINIC! HANG ON!

CRAIG: THIS IS VIN DIESEL! [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

VIN: THIS IS SOMETHING. THANK YOU.

CRAIG: ALL RIGHT. HAVE A SEAT. NUMBER ONE MOVIE. WHAT DID IT CLEAR THE FIRST WEEKEND?

VIN: \$41 MILLION.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: WHAT DID YOU PREDICT?

VIN: \$18.

CRAIG: WOW, THAT'S AMAZING.

VIN: I TRY NOT TO MAKE THE PREDICTIONS BECAUSE SO MUCH -- YOU WORK SO HARD TO MAKE THE FILM AND YOU WANT PEOPLE TO SEE YOUR WORK AND THEN WHEN EVERYBODY LIKE YOU GREAT PEOPLE COME OUT TO SEE THE FILM.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: LET ME TRY TO PUT IT IN PERSPECTIVE. YOU'RE BIGGER NOW THAN RUSSELL CROW. YOU'RE BIGGER THAN TRAVOLTA RIGHT NOW, RIGHT?

VIN: I COULD BENCH PRESS MORE THAN BOAT OF THEM.

CRAIG: YEAH.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: YOU DO HAVE SOME GUNS, DON'T YOU? YOU DO HAVE SOME GUNS.

VIN: YEAH, I GUESS.

CRAIG: AND RUSSELL CROWE IS WHAT? 5'8", 5'9"?

VIN: I DON'T KNOW.

CRAIG: I'M SURPRISED. HE'S 5'9". HE HAS A BUNCH OF BODYGUARDS. HE'S ALL UP TIGHT. THE REPORTERS NOW ARE BOMBARDING YOU WITH QUESTIONS?

VIN: A LOT OF QUESTIONS.

CRAIG: DO YOU LIKE WHAT THEY'RE ASKING YOU?

VIN: A LOT OF GOOFY QUESTIONS.

CRAIG: SUCH AS?

VIN: SOMEBODY ASKED ME AFTER DOING THE FILM, DO I FEEL INCLINE TO DRIVE FASTER. [LAUGHTER]

AND SOMEBODY ASKED ME IF I HAD A LOT OF SPEEDING TICKETS LIKE ON NATIONAL TV LIKE I WAS SUPPOSED TO SAY, YEAH, I'VE GOT LIKE 10 OUTSTANDING SPEEDING TICKETS.

CRAIG: THOSE WERE QUESTIONS YOU DIDN'T LIKE THAT WERE SO SILLY.

VIN: THEY WERE POINTLESS AND INCRIMINATING.

CRAIG: I'LL RIP THESE QUESTIONS UP.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: WE'RE -- WE WON'T TALK ABOUT THE KIND OF CAR YOU DRIVE OR ANY OF THAT STUFF, RIGHT?.

CRAIG: WE'RE NOT GOING TO DO THAT.

VIN: THE FACT THAT I DRIVE A TRUCK CAN'T BE THAT IMPORTANT, RIGHT?

CRAIG: IS THAT WHAT YOU DRIVE?

VIN: YEAH.

CRAIG: ARE YOU DOING CURLS IN THE TRUCK?

VIN: YEAH. [LAUGHTER]

THAT'S GOOD. I'VE GOT A LITTLE WORKOUT STATION IN THE BACK OF MY S.U.V.

CRAIG: WE HAD ONE OF THE LADIES ON, JORDANA BREWSTER.

VIN: GREAT ACTRESS.

CRAIG: YEAH. VERY PRETTY.

VIN: VERY, VERY PRETTY.

CRAIG: VERY SHARP. **VIN:** VERY SHARP. VERY CEREBRAL. VERY GOOD ACTOR. MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ IS IN THE MOVIE, TOO. STUNNING.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: I GUESS THERE'S GOING TO BE A SEQUEL NOW.

YOU HAVE NO CHOICE, RIGHT? ONCE IT MAKES THAT MUCH MONEY, DON'T YOU GOT TO START TALKING ABOUT IT?

VIN: THEY ALREADY STARTING WRITING THE SEQUEL.

CRAIG: HOW SOON? LIKE MONDAY MORNING?

VIN: AFTER THE FIRST TEST SCREENING. THEY HAD A TEST SCREENING AND THEY STARTED WRITING THE SEQUEL IMMEDIATELY.

CRAIG: THAT'S GREAT. NORMALLY, I'M THE KIND OF GUY THAT I DON'T LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT DOG STORIES BECAUSE EVERY ACTRESS WANTS TO BRING THEIR DOG ON THE SHOW.

[LAUGHTER]

CRAIG: HOWEVER, VIN --

VIN: HERE.

CRAIG: YOU RECENTLY GOT A DOG?

VIN: I JUST GOT A DOG. I GOT A CONDY CORSO.

CRAIG: I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS?

VIN: IT'S A ITALIAN MASSIVE.

CRAIG: VERY COOL.

VIN: IT IS.

CRAIG: IS HE A BIG PART OF YOUR LIFE?

VIN: HE IS NOW BECAUSE HE'S A PUPPY.

CRAIG: I ONLY HAD ONE DOG GROWING UP AND HE WAS A GOLDEN RETRIEVER. WHEN HE WAS A PUPPY, HE COULD SLEEP UNDERNEATH OUR LITTLE COFFEE TABLE AND WE TOOK PICTURES OF HIM AND HE GREW UP AND HE WASN'T AS CUTE WHEN HE WAS A PUPPY. THE PUPPIES ARE

GREAT. ENJOY IT NOW IS WHAT I'M SAYING.

VIN: OBVIOUSLY YOU'RE PICK UP AFTER THE DOG EVERY –

CRAIG: THAT'S TRUE. IS VIN PATIENT WITH THAT?

VIN: VIN GOES AND GETS PAPER TOWELS AND -- IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MUCH YOU MAKE IN THE BOX OFFICE.

CRAIG: HE DOESN'T CARE. HE DOESN'T CARE.

VIN: HE DOESN'T CARE. I JUST KNOW THAT YOU CAN MAKE ALL THE MOVIES IN THE WORLD. IF YOU HAVE A PUPPY, YOU'RE STILL GOING TO HAVE TO PICK UP.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: I THINK THAT'S A GOT LIFE LESSON FOR ALL OF US TO REMEMBER, RIGHT?

VIN: YES.

CRAIG: I NEED TO ASK YOU, "PITCH BLACK" LAST YEAR WAS A HUGE HIT. IS THERE GOING TO BE A SEQUEL TO THAT?

VIN: THEY ARE WRITING -- THE WRITER WHO WROTE "X-MEN" DAVID AHEADER IS WRITING THE SEQUEL AND IT'S CALLED THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK AND THEY PLAN TO GO INTO PRODUCTION IN ABOUT A MONTH.

CRAIG: IS THIS COMMON KNOWLEDGE?

VIN: IT'S SEMICOMMON KNOWLEDGE. YOU'RE AHEAD OF THE CREW.

CRAIG: I LIKE TO BREAK STORIES. "PITCH BLACK" YOU'LL BE IN THE SEQUEL.

VIN: YEAH.

CRAIG: I HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR NAME WITH "TERMINATOR III. " YOU HEAR VIN DIESEL ANTICIPATES CUTE DOG AND HE CAN BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF RUSSELL CROWE. THOSE ARE THE TWO.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

VIN: YOU KNOW, IT'S SO FUNNY. YOU BOUNCE FOR NINE YEARS, -- BOUNCER FOR NINE YEARS. I GUESS YOU CAN NEVER LEAVE IT.

CRAIG: YOU WERE A BOUNCER?

VIN: YEAH, I WAS A BOUNCER IN NEW YORK CITY. I NEEDED TO HAVE THE DAYS FREE TO GO ON AUDITIONS THAT NEVER PAID OFF OBVIOUSLY AND SO -- I MEAN, I'M SERIOUS.

CRAIG: WELL, IT'S PAID OFF NOW.

VIN: PAID OFF AFTER I -- I HAD TO DO SOME THINGS. I HAD TO KIND OF CHANGE THE STRATEGY A BIT.

CRAIG: IS THIS A YES TO "TERMINATOR III. " I DIDN'T GET THE ANSWER?

VIN: THIS IS A VERY COOL AUDIENCE.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

VIN: SERIOUSLY.

CRAIG: WHEN WE COME BACK, "FIVE QUESTIONS" WITH VIN DIESEL! ... [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: VIN DIESEL. IS IT THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS OR FAST AND FURIOUS.

CRAIG: OK. YOU GOT ADVICE YEARS AGO WAS IT FROM THE GREAT HARRISON FORD?

VIN: YES, DID I.

CRAIG: WHAT WAS THAT. IT MIGHT HELP SOME OF THE YOUNG ACTORS HERE.

VIN: GOOD ADVICE. I WAS ON A SET IN NEW YORK ABOUT 11 YEARS AGO AND HE WAS AT THE CRAFT SERVICE TABLE. IF YOU WANT TO BE A SUCCESSFUL ACTOR, WHO DO YOU TALK TO? IF YOU WANT TO BE A SUCCESSFUL LAWYER OR DOCTOR, YOU INTERN. IF YOU WANT TO BE ONE OF GUYS, IT'S HARD TO GET TO THEM. I WAS AT THIS CRAFT TABLE AND THEY WERE PUTTING TOGETHER A COLD CUT SANDWICH. HE WAS PUTTING TOGETHER A SALAMI SANDWICH OR SOMETHING. I SAID, HAIROSON, CAN I ASK YOU A QUESTION? HE KIND OF LOOKS OVER AT ME. I SAID, HOW DID YOU DO IT? HOW DID YOU GET WHERE YOU ARE? HE SAYS, COME OVER HERE,

KID. WE SIT ON THESE MILK CRATES.

CRAIG: THAT'S COOL.

VIN: VERY COOL.

CRAIG: I'M PICTURING. HE'S PAINTING A PICTURE.

VIN: I'M SITTING ON A MILK CRATE EATING A BALONEY SANDWICH WITH HARRISON FORD AND HE SAYS SOMETHING LIKE 15 YEARS AGO, A BUNCH OF MY FRIENDS CAME OUT FROM A SMALL TOWN, WE CAME OUT TO HOLLYWOOD. TWO YEARS WENT BY. TWO FRIENDS WENT BACK HOME. THREE YEARS WENT BY AND THREE MORE FRIENDS WENT BACK HOME. ANOTHER YEAR WENT BY AND MORE FRIENDS WENT BACK HOME. I JUST NEVER WENT BACK HOME.

CRAIG: HE DIDN'T QUIT.

VIN: HE NEVER QUIT.

CRAIG: HE NEVER QUIT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT LESSON IS MORE IMPORTANT ABOUT MAKING MORE MONEY AND CLEANING UP THE DOG POOP OR THIS ONE. YOU'VE TAUGHT US TWO THINGS. THIS IS VIN DIESEL. LIFE LESSONS.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: IT'S TIME FOR "FIVE QUESTIONS. " HERE WE ARE.

CRAIG: THIS IS GEOGRAPHY. YOU USED TO LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY. AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS IS ACTUALLY WHAT AVENUE?

VIN: SIXTH AVENUE.

CRAIG: THAT'S CORRECT. SIXTH AVENUE. WHAT TYPE OF INTERNAL COMBUSTION --

VIN: BY THE WAY, IT'S 6TH AVENUE BELOW CAPABLE IS CHURCH.

CRAIG: SEE --

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: VIN HAS COME TO PLAY. INFORMATION, LIFE LESSONS, HE'S GOT IT ALL. WHAT TYPE OF INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE USES COMPRESSION ALONE TO CREATE IGNITION?

VIN: DEDUCTIVE REASONING WOULD SAY DIESEL. I DON'T KNOW BUT I WOULD SAY DIESEL BECAUSE YOU WOULDN'T ASK THAT QUESTION.

CRAIG: THAT'S CORRECT.

VIN: HEYYYY.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: YOU WEREN'T A BOUNCER, WERE YOU? YOU WENT TO SCHOOL.

VIN: YEAH.

CRAIG: WHERE DUG?

VIN: HUNTER COLLEGE.

CRAIG: HUNTER IN NEW YORK. IS THIS A REAL WORD OR A KILBEYISM, SHOCKTANE.

VIN: NO CLUE. SHOCKTANE.

CRAIG: IS IT A REAL WORD OR DO I JUST LIKE SAYING IT. YOU'VE GOT A 50/50 CHANCE.

VIN: YOU'RE SO COMMITTED.

CRAIG: YEAH. TAKE THIS VERY SERIOUSLY.

[LAUGHTER]

CRAIG: I CAME TO LA 30 YEARS AGO.

VIN: AND YOU NEVER LEFT.

CRAIG: I CAME BY MYSELF AND I NEVER LEFT. I'VE BEEN BY MYSELF.[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: REAL WORD OR A KILBEYISM.

VIN: A KILBEYISM.

CRAIG: THAT'S CORRECT. I NEED YOU TO DRAG IT OUT A LITTLE LONGER. MILK THESE A LITTLE

MORE. GIVE OR TAKE 20, HOW MANY BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN SONGS INVOLVE A CAR? GIVE OR TAKE 20.

VIN: FIVE?

CRAIG: NO, LISTEN TO THIS. 89 AND WE'RE STILL COUNTING. EVERYTHING HE -- HERE WE GO.

VIN: I'M FROM NEW YORK.

CRAIG: SO YOU LOVE HIM? YOU LOVE THE BRUCE?

VIN: I LIKE HIM, BUT I'M NOT FROM NEW JERSEY. I'M FROM NEW YORK.

CRAIG: GOT YOU. GOT YOU.

[APPLAUSE]

VIN: I MEAN -- **CRAIG:** BY THE WAY, YOUR MOVIE PLAYED WELL IN JERSEY. YOU LIKE JERSEY.

VIN: I LOVE JERSEY. MY MANAGER'S FROM NEW JERSEY.

CRAIG: IS THIS A LONG STORY?

VIN: YEAH, IT IS A LONG STORY.

CRAIG: HERE WE GO.

VIN: THIS SHOW FEELS LIKE YOU'RE HANGING OUT WITH A BUNCH OF FRIENDS.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

CRAIG: THAT EXACTLY. IT STARTS WITH THE HOST AND FILTERS OUT. FIVE SECONDS ON THE CLOCK. RAPID FIRE. NOT INCLUDING YOURSELF, I NEED THREE BALD CELEBRITIES IN FIVE SECONDS NOT INCLUDING YOURSELF. GO.

VIN: YULE PRESENTER, SHAQ, JA RULE.

CRAIG: GENTLEMAN RULE JUST SHAVED? THAT IS CORRECT. VERY GOOD. -- JA RULE. YOU'RE ON FIRE, MAN. NICE TO MEET YOU.

VIN: GOOD TO MEET YOU.

CRAIG: VIN DIESEL.

VIN DIESEL'S (STREET) RACE RELATIONS

Words: Eurweb

"The Fast & The Furious," a movie about the underworld of hot cars and wild street races opened last weekend, driving in \$41.6 million with its adrenaline-powered story. The film stars Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, and Ja Rule as rebel street racers with a need for speed. The film's star, Diesel, steals the show with his very real portrayal of a seasoned racer, Dominic Toretto, the leader of a crew of hotrod daredevils.

Diesel, whose real name is Marc Vincent, picked up the Diesel moniker as a buff bouncer in New York. He grew up with his Mom and adoptive father in an artist's housing project in Greenwich Village. Never knowing his biological father, he says that he prefers to keep his "complicated" background a mystery, and says that it was attributed in the film.

"Fast..." depicts the different ethnicities involved in the culture of street racing. In particular, the film represents white, black, Asian, and Latino characters in the racing game. He says that he fits in pretty much with all the ethnicity's because many can't figure out what ethnicity he really is.

"[It was a hindrance] in the first 20 years," Diesel said of his "mysterious" ethnicity. **"And then we evolved, thank God."**

With the racial struggle in Hollywood, he believes is no longer as strong, one of his biggest challenges with the film was finding a balance between glamorizing the dangerous activity of street racing with being true to his character.

"It's tricky, because as a citizen of society, you should obviously be invested in the well being of society, but at the same time, there's a reason for telling whatever story that you're telling, so sometimes you have to invest yourself in the character with somewhat reckless abandonment," he said.

"Having said that, I think the film addresses the pitfalls of that lifestyle. There are casualties in the film that are directly related to the lifestyle."

Diesel, whose trek to stardom includes his first feature film, "Saving Private Ryan," began to pick up a following after leading the cast of "Pitch Black." He says that he really enjoys doing the action films, but looks forward to expanding his acting roles.

"I like to diversify, but I'm extremely flattered by the idea of doing these action films, of being the next action guy. I approach every film the same way. If a film is in theory an action film, that doesn't mean that I would treat it any differently than 'Private Ryan.' Hopefully that's represented in my work."

Vin Diesel will be starring in the upcoming "Knockaround Guys" in August, and the F. Gary Gray-directed psychological thriller "Diablo." "The Fast & The Furious" is in theaters now.

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Transcript from Vin's Jay Leno Appearance

Jay: -- HAS NEVER HEARD -- "HEY, ARE YOU BRINGING A DATE?" ALL RIGHT! [LAUGHTER] [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] FOLKS -- ALL RIGHT. FOLKS, WE HAVE TERRIFIC SHOW TONIGHT. ALL -- ALL "TONIGHT SHOW" VIRGINS TONIGHT. THEY'RE ALL GUESTS THAT HAVE NEVER APPEARED ON THE PROGRAM BEFORE. AND YOU KNOW MY FIRST GUEST FROM MOVIES LIKE "PITCH BLACK," "SAVING PRIVATE RYAN. " HE'S STARRING IN TS MOVIE, "THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS. " I LOVE THIS MOVIE! IT'S A GREAT CAR MOVIE. THIS IS ONE OF THOSE GUYS YOU'VE SEEN IN MOVIES. YOU KINDA GO, "I LIKE THAT GUY. " AND HE'S BECOMING A BIG STAR. VIN DIESEL -- VIN DIESEL IS HERE. THERE HE IS RIGHT THERE. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] AND A YOUNG STAND-UP COMEDIAN MAKING HIS FIRST APPEARANCE ON "THE TONIGHT SHOW. " ARJ BARKER IS HERE. ARJ BARKER. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] THERE HE IS RIGHT THERE. SWIPING -- [APPLAUSE] SWIPING THINGS FROM "THE TONIGHT SHOW" GIFT BAG. AND HERE PERFORMING FROM HER CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED NEW CD -- SHE'S MAKING HER "TONIGHT SHOW" DEBUT TONIGHT HERE, AS WELL -- ALICIA KEYS. ICIA KEYS. THERE SHE IS RIGHT THERE. VERY YOUNG TALENTED YOUNG WOMAN. WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK WITH "IDIOT FOR A DAY. " SAY HELLO TO KEVIN EUBANKS AND "THE TONIGHT SHOW" BAND.

...

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] [APPLAUSE]

Jay: WELCOME BACK. VIN DIESEL IS ON HIS WAY OUT.

STAND-UP COMEDI N ARJ BARKER IS HERE. AND ALICIA KEYS. HEY, KEV, I GOT THE NAME OF THAT GUY. JAVIER CASTILLEJO IS THE

--

Kevin: OH, THAT'S THE GUY FIGHNG?

Jay: THAT'S THE GUY HE'S FIGHTING.

Kevin: OH, COOL. THAT'S TOMORROW, HUH?

Jay: YEAH, THAT'S TOMORROW. [LIGHT LAUGHTER] THAT'S WHAT IT IS, YEAH. BUT I WOULD'VE -- I SCREWED UP THE NOLOGUE -- I WOULD HAVE TRIPPED OVER THAT.

Kevin: NO, NO, YOU DID THE RIGHT THING.

Jay: I DID THE RIGHT THING. [LAUGHTER] YOU KNOW MY FIRST GUEST FROM MOVIES LIKE "PITCH BLACK," "SAVING PRIVATE RYAN," "BOILER ROOM. " HIS CURRENT NEW FILM -- "FAST AND THE FURIOUS. " I LOVE THIS MOVIE. IT'S A GREAT CAR MOVIE. I MEAN, IF YOU'RE A CAR GUY -- NO SPID SPECIAL EFFECTS. REAL CARS SPINNING OUT. AND IT'S A GOOD STORY, TOO. HE DOES A TERRIFIC JOB. "THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS" -- IT OPENS RIGHT NOW. PLEASE WELCOME VIN DIESEL! [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

Jay: HOW ARE YOU, BUDDY? GOOD TO SEE YA. [APPLAUSE] HEY, THANKS FOR COMING.

Vin: THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME.

Jay: I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING -- I MET YOU ONCE AT A PARTY REAL QUICK. BUT, LIKE I SAID, YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE GUYS THAT I WLD SAY, "OOH, I LIKE THAT GUY. THAT GUY'S A COOL GUY. WE GOTTA GET HIM ON THE SHOW. " SO I'M GLAD WE FINALLY GOT YOU. NOW TELL ME ABOUT -- I KNOW YOU'RE FROM -- YOU'RE FROM NEW YORK CITY?

Vin: FROM NEW YORK CITY, YEAH.

Jay: NOW, WHERE IN THE CITY ARE YOU? BRONX GUY? QUEENS GUY?

Vin: NO, WE LIVED ALL OVER. BUT I GREW UP FOR THE MAJORITY IN THE VILLAGE.

Jay: OKAY. OH, IN THE VILLAGE, OKAY. NOW, WERE YOU ALWAYS AN ACTOR?

Vin: I STARTED ACTING WHEN I WAS 7 YEARS OLD.

Jay: OH, OKAY.

Vin: A BUNCH OF FRIENDS AND I WERE TERRORIZING THE NEIGHBORHOOD ON OUR BANANA-SEAT BIKES.

Jay: RIGHT. [LIGHT LAUGHTER]

Vin: ND WE WENT INTO THIS SEEDY HOTEL CALLED THE JAMES STREET HOTEL. AND AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HOTEL WAS A THEATER CALLED -- WHICH LATER BECAME THE THEATER FOR THE NEW CITY. D WE WERE IN THERE, AND WE WERE VANDALIZING THE PLACE AND RUNNING AROUND PLAYING TAG -- ALL THESE STUPID LE GAMES. AND A WOMAN COMES OUT OF THE DARKNESS INTO THE SPOTLIGHT AND SAYS, "IF YOU KIDS WANT TO PLAY HERE, COME HERE EVERY DAY AT 4:00. HERE'S THE SCRIPT. HERE'S \$20 A WEEK. "

Jay: WOW. WELL, THAT'S PRETTY COOL.

Vin: YEAH, IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I EVER MADE AN AUDIENCE LAUGH WITHOUT GETTING SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE. [LAUGHTER]

Jay: WOW. SO -- AND HOW LONG DID THAT CONTINUE? DID THAT CONTINUE FOR A WHILE?

Vin: WELL, UNEMPLOYMENT CONTINUED FOR A VERY LONG -- [LAUGHTER]

Jay: WELL, NO, BUT -- I MEAN PERFORMING IN THAT -- I MEAN, IT'S VERY NICE -- SOMETIMES KIDS DON'T -- PEOPLE DON'T TAKE THE TIME WHEN THEY SEE KIDS --

Vin: THAT'S 'TRUE. I MEAN, THEY COULD HAVE, YOU KNOW, HAULED US OFF. BUT IT WAS -- YOU KNOW, I CAME FROM A VERY MAGICAL, ARTISTIC ENVIRONMENT.

Jay: YEAH.

Vin: YOU KNOW, GREW UP IN ARTIST HOUSING, WHERE --

Jay: NO WHEN YOU SAY "ARTIST HOUSING" -- IN NEW YORK?

Vin: GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIZED HOUSING FOR ARTISTS THAT ARE POOR BUT EXCELLENT AND TALENTED.

Jay: WOW. I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT -- I DIDN'T KNOW WE HAD THAT.

Vin: YEAH, IT'S A VERY RARE THING.

Jay: LIKE A HOMELESS GUY THAT CAN PAINT. HEY! [LIGHT LAUGHTER]

Vin: NOT A LOT OF IT, BUT -- AND SO THERE WERE A LOT OF POETS AND SCULPTORS AND PLAYWRIGHTS AND MUSICIANS AND JAZZ MUSICIANS.

Jay: AND YOU'RE A TWIN, IS THAT RIGHT?

Vin: I'M A TWIN.

Jay: OKAY.

Vin: 'M A TWIN. [LAUGHTER] THERE'S MORE PEOPLE HERE THAN, AT THE ZIEGFELD ON A SATURDAY NIGHT.

Jay: OH, REALLY? [LIGHT LAUGHTER] WELL, THAT'S PROBABLY TRUE. AND SOME ARE ACTUALLY WATCHING AT HOME.

Vin: NO! [LAUGHTER] OOH, THIS DOES GET INTERESTING.

Jay: BUT ARE YOU AN EXACT TWIN?

Vin: NO, HE'S THE ANTITHESIS OF ME. HE'S GOT BLONDE HAIR AND BLUE EYES.

Jay: I DON'T THINK THAT'S A TWIN. [LAUGHTER]

Vin: YEAH, IT'S A FREAK SHOW.

Jay: I MEAN, ARE YOU TWINS LIKE -- DO YOU HAVE THAT THING WHERE, IF YOU'RE IN CALIFORNIA, YOU GO, "RING!" HE'S IN NEW YORK, AND HE GOES, "HELLO?" I MEAN --

Vin: NO, NO, NO. HE'S GOT TWO LOVELY KIDS. HE'S MARRIED. HE'S BEEN MARRIED FOR 12 YEARS.

Jay: SO WHO'S THE OLDER?

Vin: THAT'S A VERY GOOD QUESTION.

Jay: YOU DON'T KNOW?

Vin: NO, I DO KNOW. BUT IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT FACT. 'CAUSE I'M 14 MINUTES OLDER THAN MY BROTHER.

Jay: AND I'LL BET YOU DON'T LORD THAT OVER HIM. [LAUGHTER]

Vin: WELL, IT DOES COME WITH ITS PERKS, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

Jay: REAL? NOW, DO YOU REALLY SEE YOURSELF AS THE OLDER BROTHER BASED ON THIS 14 MINUTES?

Vin: WELL, I HAD TO DEAL WITH BEING THE OLDER BROTHER. I HAD TO DEAL WITH THE ADDED RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING --

Jay: GOT YOUR LICENSE FIRST. [LAUGHTER]

Vin: I GOT DEVIRGINIZED FIRST.

Jay: RIGHT, YOU REALLY GOT -- SO HE HAD TO WAIT TEN MINUTES? I SEE. [LAUGHTER]

Vin: NO, NO. I HAVE A REALLY GOOD STORY.

Jay: REALLY?

Vin: I ALMOST SHOULDN'T DO IT.

Jay: OH, NO, NOW YOU HAVE TO DO IT. [LAUGHTER]

Vin: HE'S GONNA KILL ME.

Jay: I NEVER EVEN HEARD OF "DEVIRGINIZED. " THAT'S EVEN A WORD I DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED. SO GO AHEAD.

Vin: ALL RIGHT. MY BROTHER IS WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND. HE'S 16 YEARS OLD. AND HE COMES UPSTAIRS TO THE HOUSE AND ASKED MY FATHER IF HE SHOULD DO THIS, IF HE SHOULD ACTUALLY HAVE SEX. AND MY FATHER SAYS, "YOU KNOW, I DON'T -- PAUL, I REALLY DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD. I THINK YOU SHOULD WAIT, YOU KNOW? BECAUSE THIS IS AN IMPORTANT THING. " AND HAD HE DONE IT, HE WOULD HAVE LOST HIS VIRGINITY BEFORE ME. BUT THAT'S LIKE A REAL STUPID THING TO TALK ABOUT ON "JAY LENO. " [LAUGHTER] YOU KNOW, YOU WAIT YOUR WHOLE LIFE TO GET ON "JAY LENO," AND YOU TALK ABOUT VIRGINITY. [LAUGHTER]

Jay: DID YOU FLIP YOUR DAD A \$20 FOR DOING THAT? "THANKS, P. "

Vin: I WAS LIKE, "DAD, BOY, YOU MADE ME MACHO. " [LAUGHTER]

Jay: NOW YOUR MOM -- SHE WAS AN ASTROLOGER?

Vin: AN ASTROLOGIST, YEAH. SHE IS -- BUT SHE'S NOT THE KIND OF ASTROLOGIST THAT SAYS, YOU KNOW, "DON'T GO TO SCHOOL TODAY. "

Jay: "YOU WILL MEET A FRIEND TODAY. " "I DID! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!"

Vin: YEAH, NOT THE GOOFY --

Jay: BUT SHE'S LIKE A PSYCHOLOGIST, TOO, ISN'T IT?

Vin: YEAH, SHE REINFORCED IT WITH A MASTERS IN PSYCHOLOGY.

Jay: NOW, HOW DOES THAT WORK FOR YOU? LIKE, YOU SAY, "MOM, I'M AUDITIONING -- " "YOU ALREADY GOT IT. " I MEAN, DO YOU GET THAT?

Vin: NO. IT'S MORE LIKE, "MOM, I'M AUDITIONING -- " "SO WHAT ARE YOU BOTHERING ME FOR?" [LAUGHTER]

Jay: IS SHE IMPRESSED WITH SHOW BIZ? I MEAN, IS THIS, LIKE, COOL? YOU GROW UP, AND YOU WERE INHE LITTLE BASEMENT AND THING IN T ARTIST COMMUNITY. AND NOW YOU'RE A BIG

MOVIE STAR. I MEAN, THAT'S GOTTA BE -- SHE'S GOT TO BE LIKE, "OOH, THIS IS VERY COOL. "

Vin: SHE'S NOT THAT EASILY IMPRESSED.

Jay: NO?

Vin: NO, NO. WHEN I DID "SAVING PRIVATE RYAN" -- AND THAT WAS LIKE A BIG THING -- I FLEW HER OUT TO IRELAND. AND WE WENT TO LONDON. AND TOM HANKS THREW MY 30th BIRTHDAY.

Jay: RIGHT.

Vin: AND SO IT'S TOM HANKS, HIS WIFE RITA, STEVEN SPIELBERG AND KATE, AND A FEW OTHER CAST MEMBERS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DORCHESTER HOTEL. AND, YOU KNOW, WHAT'S BETTER THAN HAVING YOUR SON BEING HONORED -- YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN? AND SO I ASKED MY MOTHER LATER -- YOU KNOW, I SAID, "AREN'T YOU SHELL-SHOCKED THAT, YOU KNOW, THESE PEOPLE THREW MY BIRTHDAY PARTY?" SHE WAS JUST LIKE, "YOU KNOW, I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU HAD IT IN YOU. "

Jay: OH, YEAH.

Vin: I'M LIKE, "MOM, COME ON. "

Jay: BUT, SEE, MOMS NEVER --

Vin: I'M LIKE, "MOM, DO CARTWHEELS OR SOMETHING. " [LAUGHTER]

Jay: WHEN I WAS ON THE COVER -- I GOT ON THE COVER OF "TIME" MAGAZINE WHEN I GOT THIS JOB. AND I CALLED MY MOM IN BOSTON. I SAID, "MOM, I'M ON THE COVER OF 'TIME. '" I SAID, "CALL AUNT EDIE AND EVERYBODY IN NEW JERSEY. " SHE GOES, "OH, WELL, YOU WON'T BE ON THE COVER OF THE ONES DOWN THERE. " [LAUGHTER] "THEY JUST PUT YOU ON HERE 'CAUSE THEY KNOW YOU'RE FROM THE AREA. " SHE JUST THOUGHT, LIKE, SINCE WE LIVED AROUND BOSTON, THEY DO A FEW ISSUES FOR THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED AROUND HERE. [LAUGHTER]

Vin: I GET THAT.

Jay: BUT MOMS -- YOU CAN'T IMPRESS A MOM.

Vin: NO, THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MOTHERS.

Jay: UNLESS YOU BECOME A DOCTOR.

Vin: YES.

Jay: AND -- OR GET AN "A, WHICH NEVER HAPPENS.

Vin: OH, COME ON. NOT A CHANCE.

Jay: NOW, LET TALK ABOUT "THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS. " NOW, SEE, I LOVE THIS MOVIE, BUT I'M A CAR GUY. AND THIS IS VERY AUTHENTIC TO ME.

Vin: YOU'RE THE CAR GUY.

Jay: THERE'S NO STUPID COMPUTER THINGS OR -- IT'S ALL REAL CARS GOING FAST. AND IT'S ABOUT RACING, WHICH IS A LITTLE IRRESPONSIBLE, BUT IT'S A FANTASY. IT'S A MOVIE. THE CHARACTER YOU PLAY -- TELL PEOPLE ABOUT THE FILM.

Vin: I PLAY A CHARACTER NAMED DOMINIC TORETTO, WHO IS THIS MULTIDIMENSIONAL CHARACTER WHO HAS THESE ADMIRABLE ATTRIBUTES LIKE HS HONORABLE, HE'S GIVING AND A CARETAKER. BUT HE LIVES OUTSIDE THE LAW.

Jay: "OUTSIDE THE LAW. " HE'S A CRIMINAL. [LAUGHTER] I LOVE THAT. HE LIVES "OUTSIDE THE LAW. "

Vin: I SHOULDN'T DECORATE IT.

Jay: YOU'RE A BAD GUY WHO'S REALLY A GOOD GUY AT HEART.

Vin: I'M A BAD GUY -- WELL, ALL THOSE FILMS THAT YOU MENTIONED, I'M DRAWN TO ANTI-HERO. YOU KNOW, THEY'RE MORE FASCINATING TO ME. THE PICTURE-PERFECT HEROES ARE UNREALISTIC AND HARD TO IDENTIFY WITH. SO -- I EXPLORE THOSE CHARACTERS. YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

Jay: SEE, LIKE, I LIVE OUTSIDE PRIME TIME. [LAUGHTER] I'M KIND OF ON TV, BUT I'M OUTSIDE PRIME TIME. NOW WE HAVE A RACE CLIP. AND THIS DOESN'T REALLY TELL YOU WHAT THE MOVIE'S ABOUT, BUT IT'S AN EXCITING CLIP.

Vin: ADRENALINE.

Jay: YEAH, IT REALLY IS AN ADRENALINE RUSH MOVIE. YOU KNOW, IT'S JUST A GREAT MOVIE. 'S A -- THIS IS A GUY'S -- LOOK, YOU TOOK THE WOMEN TO THE "BRIDGET JONES. THIS IS OUR PAYBACK. [LAUGHTER] TAKE LOOK. [MOTORS RUNNING] [BEEPING]

SHUT UP! [METALLIC PINGING]

UH! UH! [PANTING] [TIRES SCREECHING] [APPLAUSE]

Jay: OH, IT'S GREAT. GREAT JOB. THE MOVIE IS "THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS. " AND IT'S PLAYING RIGHT NOW. VIN, GOOD TO SEE YOU, BUDDY. THANKS FOR COMING.

Vin: THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME.

Jay: VIN DIESEL. BE RIGHT BACK WITH ARJ BARKER RIGHT AFTER THIS. ...

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DIESEL FUEL

Source: US weekly Magazine, July 02/01

By Irene Zutell

Even though he just bought a new puppy and a house in the Hollywood Hills, Vin Diesel hasn't changed much from when he was a scrappy kid growing up on the streets of New York.

"Good boy, Good boy," says Vin Diesel as he leans over Roman, his Italian mastiff puppy, whom he has had for only five days. Diesel has been preoccupied with getting the dog settled into his new home, and it has made him late for the interview. He tries to explain his tardiness. **"There was a lack of communication among my team,"** says Diesel. **"Roman spent the morning at the vet for his checkup. We were running late."** He considers what he just said. **"I probably should hire somebody from my team to watch my dog.**

Team?

Only two years in Los Angeles and already Diesel, 33, has an entourage. **"He has a staff of people around him--it's like this ant farm--they just feed him all day,"** says Rob Cohen, the director of Diesel's new movie, THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS, which opened June 22. **"He's got these runners, and he'll say 'Baja Fresh' or 'Starbucks,' and off they go."**

Adjusting to celebrity has apparently come naturally to Diesel. **"He's always had a strong ambition,"** says Kenna Doeringer, the film editor on MULTI-FACIAL, a 1995 short film that Diesel wrote, directed and starred in about an aspiring actor who faces prejudice. **"The one thing Vin wanted was to be famous."**

But he is still uncomfortable with media attention and doesn't handle interviews well. **"Why do people feel the need to know things about me?"** he asks. He won't say much about his family. He won't talk about his ethnicity (**"Just say I'm multicultural,"** says Diesel). He even finesses innocuous questions about his workout regimen.

Although he won't admit it, Diesel's real name is Mark Vincent. He has a twin brother, Paul, a sound editor (who is light-skinned with blue eyes and blond hair), and two younger sisters. The man who raised him, whom Diesel considers his father, is a theater director and a teacher. Diesel won't reveal anything about his biological father, other than to say **"I have no overwhelming desire to meet him."** His mother is an astrologer (**"No, she never predicted I would be a star"**).

He grew up in New York's Greenwich Village, where he lived in a small apartment in a building filled with artists. **"I had this magical childhood. In the winter, I remember my father pulling my brother and me around Washington Square Park in a cheap red plastic sled,"** he says. **"In the summer, my mother would take us to the fountain at the park, and we'd swim in it. When I was 5, I was like a little dog hustling around the neighborhood. I would go into a local restaurant and wash a few dishes for some French fries. I felt like the coolest guy in the world."**

At 13, his squeaky boy's voice cracked into the deep bass that it is now. **"Kids used to tease me about my voice. I remember calling my friends up, and their moms would say 'Don't you have a sexy voice.' I'm like 'Huh? Is Dave there?' I didn't even know what that meant."**

Diesel graduated in 1985 from the Anglo-American International School in New York. The high school was

private, and about half of its students were from other countries. Then Diesel studied English at Hunter College but dropped out after three years to pursue acting. **"I knew this was what I wanted to do,"** he says **"So I thought, Let's get on with it."** To leave his days open for auditions, he became a bouncer at the Tunnel nightclub in New York.

Diesel wasn't getting movie roles. Frustrated, he put his energies and a few thousand dollars of his savings into writing and producing a screenplay. The result, MULTI-FACIAL, was screened at the Anthology Film Archives in New York. Other screenings followed, as did an invitation to the 1995 Cannes Film Festival, where Steven Spielberg caught a showing of the movie. He was so impressed with Diesel that he created the role of Private Adrian Caparzo for him, the first soldier in Captain Miller's squad to get killed, in 1998's SAVING PRIVATE RYAN.

Suddenly Diesel was gaining momentum. He was the voice of the title character in 1999's THE IRON GIANT. Last year, he starred as the futuristic convict in PITCH BLACK and as a trader in BOILER ROOM. He has just completed filming EL DIABLO, in which he plays a DEA agent, with MENACE 11 SOCIETY's Larenz Tate. In August, he turns up as a mobster in KNOCKAROUND GUYS. And there have been rumors circulating that he might replace Arnold Schwarzenegger as the cyborg in TERMINATOR 3.

Along with movie roles comes money, and Diesel has been reaping the rewards of his growing desirability. Last year, he bought an 1,800 square-foot bungalow in the Hollywood Hills, complete with a pool. **"Getting a house was a huge, huge deal because my family always rented. But I'm not extravagant."** Diesel scans his outfit--jeans, a white t-shirt, black work boots. **"Look at how I'm dressed. I'm wearing the same things I wore when I didn't have the money."**

But fame has forced him to change his lifestyle considerably. **"My closest friends would say I was happier before I had money and fame,"** he says. **"I was more extroverted. I used to be a clown. I used to really laugh at the movies, and now I can't. People judge me by these things."**

Although he is single now, Diesel wants a family with a "Whole bunch of kids." And Roman is easing him into fatherhood. **"I'm so tired. I was up every two hours with Roman last night,"** he says of housebreaking the dog.

Then he smiles. It's time to go. After all, the puppy is tired from his trip to the vet. And Diesel wants to be a good father.

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DIESEL POWER: VIN DIESEL REVS UP FOR 'THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS'

Hollywood's action heroes are aging fast. Clint Eastwood, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, Harrison Ford ... even Mel Gibson is edging inexorably towards the exit.

Not to worry, though, because Vin Diesel is more than happy to step into their shoes.

The actor with a name like a fuel pump has been dancing on the brink of fame since Steven Spielberg hired him to play Private Adrian Caparzo, the first of Tom Hanks' team to take a bullet in "Saving Private Ryan" (1998). In 1999 Diesel played a stockbroker with a decent streak in "The Boiler Room," and last year he caught audience's eyes as a serial killer with a difference in the stylish "Pitch Black" (2000), a surprise hit which has become something of a cult classic.

He's made a specialty of hypermasculine roles, and the testosterone flows again in "The Fast and The Furious," a noisy but fascinating look into the subculture of macho men who race souped-up cars through the streets of Los Angeles, collecting Spandex-clad babes while staying one step ahead of the local cops.

Opening nationwide on June 22, the movie is aimed squarely at teen-agers — who else's ear drums could take the assault? And while it's unlikely to get much attention at next year's Academy Awards, it definitely establishes Diesel as a man to watch.

Speaking by telephone from his Hollywood Hills home, Diesel says in a rich molasses tone that he sees "The Fast and Furious" as "'Donny Brasco' Meets 'The Wild One.'"

And indeed, somewhere in the midst of all the high-energy accelerations, burning rubber and exploding metal, attentive viewers will find a story: Undercover cop (Paul Walker) infiltrates the cocky Diesel's gang to

try to crack a chain of wild, high-speed truck hijackings.

"What we're doing with *The Fast and the Furious*," director Rob Cohen says in a separate interview, **"is in a sense taking the Western and recreating it in a contemporary urban milieu. Our film deals with some of the most important themes of the classic Westerns — loyalty, betrayal, freedom — but instead of horses we've got horsepower."**

Cohen adds that he sees Diesel as a legitimate heir apparent to Hollywood's aging action icons. It's a heady thought for the 34-year-old actor, who has been performing since he made his Off-Broadway stage debut at age 7 in "Dinosaur's Door," staged by the prestigious Theatre for the New City.

Art ran in his family: His stepfather headed a local repertory-theater company — Diesel never knew his birth father — and his mother was a psychologist and also an astrologer. His twin brother, Paul Vincent, is a film editor. Beyond that, the actor is reluctant to discuss his family. **"I'm probably fighting a losing battle and am foolish to think I can keep my personal family life private,"** he concedes. **"But right now I steer away from personal questions."**

He did grow up poor, he allows.

"But I had a rich childhood in other ways," he adds. **"My parents always found a way to make things work, and education was always important. We never owned a car and we weren't taking trips, but I did go to \$14 camp — 14 bucks and a towel was all you needed."**

"I always resented that line, 'We don't have enough money.'"

After attending New York's Hunter College for three years as an English major, Diesel dropped out and in 1995 wrote "Multi-Facial," a short film based on his own experience as a struggling actor of a racially mixed background. It was accepted for the Cannes Film Festival, where it earned rave reviews.

He moved to Los Angeles, raised \$50,000 and in 1997 made his first feature, "Strays," in which he played an amorous drug pusher. Even though it was selected for the 1997 Sundance Film Festival, he had hard time selling it. But not long afterward Spielberg, impressed by "Multi-Facial," hired him for "Saving Private Ryan."

Perhaps his best-known role, however, did nothing to enhance his Hollywood visibility: His strong, resonant voice made him perfect for the voice of "The Iron Giant" (1999), a cult favorite which is already considered an animation classic.

Like most of his films to date, "The Fast and the Furious" takes full advantage of Diesel's powerful physique and dominating screen presence, both of which he attributes to eight years spent as a bouncer for some of New York's hippest clubs, beginning when he was 17.

"As a bouncer I began working out and bulking up," he recalls. **"I had to build up a kind of formidable presence that I never had as a kid. And, somewhere along the line, that presence emerged."**

Actually, he says, being a nightclub bouncer is much like being an action-film character.

"You do the job without weaponry," he explains. **"You have to be resourceful and commanding, and be in control without action. You set a tone in a job that can be dangerous, because you're sometimes dealing with people who are fueled by booze or drugs and you have to defuse a situation like a hostage negotiator. You're trying to provide a safe environment for people to have fun in, so in a way that's kind of heroic — that's being a real bodyguard, and in a way you're a superhero."**

Diesel has written a screenplay about his bouncer days, entitled "The Doorman." Originally he had another, bigger-name actor in mind for the title role, but now he himself has a bigger name, so he's rewriting with a view to playing the lead himself.

Playing an autobiographical role would be a welcome change for Diesel, who admits that his New York youth left him ill-equipped to play a car racer.

"Growing up I knew nothing about cars," he says. **"First, you need a fortune to garage a car in Manhattan. I rode a motorcycle to school every day and sometimes took cabs. And I certainly didn't know much about the kind of cars in our picture."**

To learn what he was missing, he ventured out to Los Angeles street races and got to know some of the people who take part in these highly illegal competitions.

"It was a pretty bizarre scene," he recalls. **"Some nights the races were broken up, as local cops swooped in on us with helicopters and everyone took off running. But they weren't criminals, and you didn't have to be nefarious to race those cars."**

Hard on the heels of "The Fast and the Furious," Diesel filmed "Knockaround Guys." Co-starring with John Malkovich and Dennis Hopper, he plays a Mafia boss's son who is sent to a small town in Montana to retrieve a fortune in cash. The film will open this fall.

Also recently completed is "Diablo," in which he plays a Drug Enforcement Administration agent who begins to fall apart after his wife dies.

Diesel, who co-produced "Diablo," says that he's satisfied with the direction his acting career is taking, and in particular that he's generally cast without regard to race or ethnic origin.

"I'm being termed a `multicultural actor,'" he says. **"When I was growing up, actors were either this or that — they had very clear orders, and there was little room for multicultural parts. It's fascinating to be an actor who isn't any specific thing or type, but a human being."**

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Hot Projects: Diesel snags lead in "XXX"

By Guylaine Cadorette, Hollywood.com Staff

HOLLYWOOD, August 3, 2001 -- Looks like Vin Diesel is not about to disappear any time soon. After *The Fast and the Furious* made a sneak attack at the box office in June, Diesel has inked a deal to star in Revolution Studios' XXX.

The project will reunite the actor with *Furious* director Rob Cohen and producer Neal Moritz. The script was written by *Airheads* and *Glory Daze* scribe Rich Wilkes.

Revolution Studios exec Todd Garner described XXX as a spy thriller with extreme attitude in music and style. The project, however, is not based on the *Dark Horse* comic book by the same name.

The plot centers on a tough extreme sports player (Diesel), who is co-opted by the government to infiltrate a crime ring. Sounds like the perfect role for the hulking actor.

Diesel hits pay dirt

XXX, which begins shooting this fall, will earn the actor the hefty sum of \$10 million. That's quite a raise from the \$2.5 million Diesel earned for his role in the upcoming *El Diablo* and even better than the low seven figures he reportedly received for *Furious*. Could Diesel be on his way to joining the \$20 million-and-over club like evergreen members Mel Gibson, Jim Carrey, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone?

The \$10 million figure brought about some speculation as to whether Revolution Studios could even afford to have Diesel star in XXX, considering the substantial price tag attached. Along with Diesel, the studio was also considering *Trainspotting* actor Ewan McGregor. But concessions were apparently made to get Diesel his asking price without breaking the bank, or the film's \$50 million or so budget.

When did he get so popular?

When *Furious* topped the box office in June, Cohen told *Variety*, "To say that I am surprised and stunned is a wild understatement."

The actioner was originally slated for a spring release but stepped up to the summer schedule after extremely favorable test screenings.

Diesel's pre-*Furious* repertoire includes *The Iron Giant*, *Boiler Room*, *Pitch Black* and *Saving Private Ryan*. He also wrote, directed, produced and starred in the 1995 short film *Multi-Facial*, which caught Steven Spielberg's attention at the Cannes Film Festival. The film focuses on an actor struggling to get roles because of his race.

But with the runaway success of *Furious*, it seems Diesel was the one holding the trump card in the negotiations for *XXX*.

It's all about the sequels

Moritz has already confirmed that talks are under way for a sequel to *Furious*. If the project ever makes its way into production, Diesel would most likely come back to reprise his role as Dom, but at what price?

Recently, Universal Studios and director David Twohy were able to woo Diesel into making a sequel to *Pitch Black* called *The Chronicles of Riddick*. The film would follow the continuing adventures of Riddick, a prisoner (Diesel) who ends up protecting his captors from aliens on a hostile planet.

Diesel is also in talks to star alongside Schwarzenegger in *Terminator 3*.

What's next?

Along with *El Diablo*, Diesel will also star with John Malkovich and Dennis Hopper in the long-awaited *Knockaround Guys* and has been mentioned for a role in the remake of *M* with troubled rapper DMX. The comic book fan has denied rumors about any attachment to the big screen adaptation of *Hellboy*.

Diesel told SCIFWire.com in June, "Absolutely none, except for my admiration for the project," he said in an interview. "This won't be the first time that I find out what my next project is from a team of reporters."

One thing remains certain: this juggernaut of an actor may become one of the baddest action figures in films to come.

XXX has been earmarked for a summer 2002 release.

Heartthrobs: Vin Diesel

Vin Diesel has his charges dropped from murder, in last year's sci-fi thriller **Pitch Black**, to reckless endangerment in **The Fast & the Furious**. The high-octane new film features a group of Los Angeles street gangs, who modify sports cars into high-octane weapons that they race illegally.

Diesel has not always been on the wrong side of the law. In fact, his feature film debut was as an American hero in the Steven Spielberg smash, **Saving Private Ryan**. Following that success, he went on to offer his voice for the lead in Warner Brothers' animated feature **The Iron Giant**. After that innocent role, Diesel became Hollywood's latest bad boy as corrupt stockbroker in **Boiler Room**.

As every bad boy should, Diesel uses an assumed name. Vincent is actually his last name, but he refuses to disclose his real first name and Diesel is the name the actor used in his previous career as a New York bouncer.

Diesel, and his twin brother Paul, was born in New York City. He never met his biological father, and was raised by his mother—an astrologer—and his stepfather, who worked in the theater.

The theater was where a young Diesel began his acting career. According to Diesel, his interest in show business began when, at three-years-old, he wandered into a circus ring, but it was at the age of seven that he got his first break when he and some friends were caught trespassing at a local stage. Rather than being arrested, Diesel was offered \$20 a week to take the stage. He continued performing at the same small theater until he began studying English at New York's Hunter College. The college career was short-lived, as he soon dropped out to pursue his acting career. Heading west, he failed to break into showbiz on his first trip to Hollywood, instead becoming a successful telemarketer.

Once he tired of selling tools, Diesel began his career in film. He started with **Multi-Facial**, a film he wrote, directed, and starred in that screened at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival. He followed by entering **Strays**—another film he wrote, directed, and starred in—at the official competition at the 1997 Sundance Film Festival. One year later, Diesel starred in **Saving Private Ryan** and audiences—particularly the women—have been *ahhing* ever since.

After **The Fast & the Furious**, Diesel will star in **Triple X**, playing an extreme-sport athlete turned hi-tech spy. After that he may return to his bad boy ways—this time as a cyborg. Nothing has been confirmed yet, but rumor has it that Diesel just may portray a villainous robot in **Terminator 3**.

--Tim Mull

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You Win Some, You Lose Some

Dateline: 7/28/01

If Vin Diesel was a rising star after the cult success of *Pitch Black*, the blockbuster status of *The Fast and the Furious* solidified his reputation as an action star. However, Diesel himself takes that term with genuine modesty.

"I'm flattered because the whole action-hero term is such a new term," Diesel said. "Steve McQueen and Sidney Poitier and Kirk Douglas, they weren't considered action. Clark Gable in *Gone with the Wind*, which is probably the most action you were going to get in 1939, but they weren't considered action heroes. But if that is the term they want to use, I am flattered that they think that many people would enjoy my work. I will tell you that I don't approach any genre a different way than I may approach another one. I treat every role I do like a role worthy of applying whatever kind of tactic, process and talent I have. If you take my performance or my understanding of the role and my appreciation for story and then dress it in CGI, that I guess becomes an action film."

Diesel demonstrated the self-deprecating wit of an action hero when talking about stunt work and bodybuilding. **"I try to do as much of my own stunts and then my stunt performers come in and emasculate me and do the impossible. What's funny as hell is the only time I really work out is when I'm not working. So, if I look big, I'm unemployed."**

For *The Fast and the Furious*, Diesel had to learn about cars, something that was new to him. **"I'm not that car orientated, like I couldn't build an engine. I grew up in New York City, so I guess I am more familiar with subways."**

As for the jargon of the film's mechanics, Diesel said, **"I learned it. I didn't know it before I got the script. I didn't know granny shifting or double clutching or any of that sh*t."**

The connection Diesel felt to the film was in the character, Dominic, although Diesel wouldn't call him an anti-hero. **"I love anti-heroes and I've explored anti-heroes and I have played anti-heroes. I don't necessarily know if this is an anti-hero. Or maybe I don't necessarily know if I understand what an anti-hero is. This is a guy who lives by his own code. There is no changing point for Dominic. He is the same guy in the beginning as he is in the end, which is unlike the Riddick character in *Pitch Black* which is unlike the Chris Varick role in *Boiler Room*. There's something very consistent about Dominic. He lives outside of the law but he has his own moral code which consists of many favorable and admirable attributes. He's honest, he's loyal and he's a caretaker. Because of that consistency throughout the picture from beginning to end I don't know if he fits the conventional anti-hero type. It's not like the Marlon Brando character in *The Wild One* where he changes a little bit in the end. This guy is who he is and he always has the conventional epiphany that an anti-hero would have in the last act, he always has with him from the moment you're introduced to him. There's not necessarily a huge character arc. He's constantly juggling these different aspects."**

In preparing for *The Fast and the Furious*, Diesel worked with his costars on the backstory of their characters. **"The background relationship with all the characters was important except for obviously the Paul Walker character which was something that needed to be discovered and was discovered. But Jordana [Brewster] and I had to kind of synchronize being brother and sister and to do it right. We had to kind of synchronize our personalities and our understandings. She actually reminds me very much of my sister. But that also was an important aspect to my relationship with Michelle. That was my first Hollywood love interest is Michelle Rodriguez, so that had to be created in an organic way and a new way and a contemporary way, that kind of rough, rugged love. The idea of two people so formidable because of whatever society put on them or for whatever reason, yet these two formidable people bring out one another's sensitivity and innocence."**

Having succeeded in action movies, Diesel is aware of the tendency for media to typecast actors in certain genres. **"[That's] always a concern because I don't want to be limited in any way, but I'm concerned about everything all the time. That's my nature. But yeah, I don't want someone to think that that's all I can do and then I can't have a career after 50, which is why I try to speckle my career with choices like *Boiler Room* and *Knockaround Guys*, less explosive-orientated [films]. But what motivates me is something different because good or bad I would do it. Good or bad I have to do it. This may sound bizarre, it may sound weird, it may sound hokey and full of sh*t, but I act because I have to act. The happiness that I derive from acting is a byproduct. It's a coincidence. I act because I have to act. I've done it all my life, when the chips were down, I've done it because it's something that I have to do and that's the bottom line. I don't really know why, maybe it's because it's therapeutic, maybe because it's so in me like a fighter in me that has to fight because it just comes out of them, I don't**

know But I just do it because I have to do it."

The son of a theater professor father and astrologer mother, Diesel said it took him a while to learn how to make business decisions that would support his love of the arts. **"A lot of years I was worried about the craft and never worried about the strategy or never thought about the business. I come from this bohemian setting in New York and I ignored the relevance of the business and the relevance of understanding the industry. I was just this guy in New York that's thinking about how to get that moment alive and how to do it and how to be truthful. I spent twenty years trying to be truthful and unemployed. I'm not motivated by money, and the money has been tempting. I have turned down money. I've turned down a lot of things, I've made big sacrifices because the role didn't seem right or something didn't feel right. I want to be critically acclaimed by the audience, by the people and the critics. I want to affect people. I want people to understand what I'm doing and what I'm saying. I want people to hear me in my work. I want people to relate to me in my work. The scary thing is when you receive accolades from critics, you empower them to ultimately hurt you later. You're letting them in, you're creating a romance. It's like falling in love. That person can potentially hurt you later. That's scary because I'm sensitive."**

Now Diesel finds himself facing the label of "sex symbol," to which he is modest. **"I never thought of myself as a sex symbol. It's always kind of weird and it's the one claim that kind of makes me blush. It feels so bizarre because I've always worked as an extrovert. I've always worked to get the attention. I've always had to work for my admiration. So, it's bizarre to be charged with these things without having to work for it, but it's very, very flattering."**

Diesel also tries to make time for writing and the possibility of going back to directing after his short film *Multi-Facial* and feature *Strays*. **"The writing/directing thing is more challenging. I also like to be challenged. That's something I will always pay attention to and always want to go back to, and eventually go back to, maybe sooner than later. But the opportunity to tell a story, a story that may be important to me is incredibly fascinating."**

Shooting has wrapped for Diesel on the film *Diablo*, which he also executive produced and will hit theaters in early 2002. **"Diablo is done. Diablo is a code name for this lethal drug cartel and I play a DEA agent who loses his wife. It's probably one of the most serious films I've ever done because it's a psychoanalytical breakdown of a DEA agent. It's very trying and lot of dark moments in the film, a lot of dark places."**

Diesel concluded with two anecdotes about his experiences with critics. **"I was watching Roger Ebert on TV and he talked about *Pitch Black* and he said something so wonderful about the fact that 'There's a guy in *Pitch Black* and on the same day it opened, *Boiler Room* opened and I didn't know it was the same guy.' I was so flattered and its shameless how happy that made me. The funniest thing I read about me, someone wrote 'is he attractive? No, not exactly.' I was like, 'Oh really, I'm not? I didn't know that!'"**

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Vin Diesel: The self-made mystery man

He's vague about his childhood and won't reveal his real name. But one thing's for sure: actor Vin Diesel has arrived. Ryan Gilbey meets him

31 August 2001

Vin Diesel is something to look at – those piercing eyes, that gigantic stubbled head, the Incredible Hulk physique which ensures that any other man in the room, however confident he may be in his masculinity, will instantly feel like Charles Hawtrey. But more than that, Diesel is something to listen to. As with the most resonant voices – James Mason, vintage Brando – you feel that you can hear his before he even opens his mouth.

I'm waiting for Vin Diesel in his hotel suite when I hear the distant rumble out in the corridor, growing nearer. Then suddenly the 34-year-old actor is in the room, filling the room, in fact, prowling over to a table that is decorated with crudités, and making a show of how ridiculous it looks for a man this big to be holding a sliver of carrot between the tips of his thick fingers. He looks dapper in black suit trousers and white shirt. A dainty silver watch, on which the hands have stopped dead, clings to his wrist. His scalp looks freshly buffed, but the eyes are sleepy from jet-lag: he's been in Philadelphia researching his new action movie, XXX.

"I play a nihilist," he purrs. "He's a former extreme games champion who gets recruited by the CIA." For XXX, he will be paid a reported \$10m (£6.8m) – enough to buy a new watch. This salary owes a great deal to

the unexpected US success of Diesel's last picture, *The Fast and the Furious*, in which he stars as Dominic Toretto, a mechanic who moonlights as a racing driver on the illegal LA street-racing circuit. In his spare time, Dominic also executes spectacular and foolhardy high-speed heists on articulated lorries. He is not, as far as I can ascertain, a nihilist. But he is one of those bad-guys-who-are-really-good that have become Diesel's speciality: think of *Boiler Room* (1999), the junior *Wall Street* in which he played a hard-nut salesman with a heart; or the splendid science-fiction horror *Pitch Black* (2000), where Diesel's unnervingly tranquil psychopath graduated to hero status; or even the animated feature *The Iron Giant* (1999), for which Diesel lent his 24-carat vocal chords to the misunderstood monster of the title.

Certainly, *The Fast and the Furious* is a better car movie than *Gone in 60 Seconds*, but then you could say that about *Driving Miss Daisy*. What really distinguishes *The Fast and the Furious* is its rabble-rousing B-movie spirit. Yes, the female characters exist solely to allay suspicions that what the men are really interested in is tinkering with each other's engines. But the movie has an undiluted trashiness that's hard to resist. Diesel is called upon to parade around in a succession of skimpy vests whilst delivering lines like "You're lucky that double case of NOS didn't melt the welds on your intake." Did he really know what he was saying?

"No," he admits. "It's not really my world. But I knew something about speed. Back in college I'd do 150mph." Speeding aside, he was a model citizen. Didn't smoke until he discovered the stress of making independent movies at the age of 26. Didn't drink because he was "somewhat puritanical". If you're looking for rough stuff, there was his time as a bouncer, getting into scraps for \$100 (£68) a night ("a ridiculous way to make a living"). I can't imagine he gets much trouble any more. Even if someone thought they could get away with spilling his mineral water, they would have his girlfriend to contend with – Michelle Rodriguez, star of *Girlfight*, whom Diesel met on *The Fast and the Furious* set. What a couple. Just imagine them in the ring with Brad and Jennifer.

I don't ask about Rodriguez. Going in to meet Vin Diesel, there are a few things you know to steer clear of. He won't reveal his real name, though the numerous websites devoted to him list it as Mark Vincent. He'll skim over his youth. The silences are apparently calculated to conceal what has been described as his "complicated" ethnic background (it's significant that his production company is called One Race, but he will say only that "race and identity are interesting to me").

He was raised in an artists' housing project in Greenwich Village by his astrologer mother and his adoptive father, a theatre teacher who eventually had to abandon his dream to pay the rent. Diesel himself broke into theatre by breaking into a theatre. "It wasn't with wire-cutters or anything," he laughs. "My friends and I were about seven years old and we were fooling around in this theatre. And this woman says, 'If you wanna come here, do it at 4pm every day,' and she hands us a script."

His entry into professional acting was not quite as smooth. When I refer to "some hard years", he shoots me a look. "Some hard years?" he says. "Make that *most* of my years. But I remember not playing the lottery because I didn't wanna win a million bucks. I thought: Let a plumber win it. I'm gonna make it anyway."

When Diesel did finally get within touching distance of his dream, it was through sheer stamina and perseverance. In 1994, he cobbled together \$3,000 (£2,00) and made a 20-minute short, *Multi-Facial*, about a struggling actor. He had written it on a word processor that he bought from a particular store because it guaranteed refunds within 30 days. *Multi-Facial* played at the Cannes Film Festival, and came to the attention of Steven Spielberg, who cast Diesel in *Saving Private Ryan*. The years of hard work that led to Spielberg's phone call now mean everything to Diesel, and I think he still looks for those roles which will force him to prove himself all over again. On *The Fast and the Furious*, he toiled away at stunt-driving school. For XXX he will research the world of extreme sports, and doubtless be found skinny-dipping with piranhas or dangling from the end of a bungee rope near you soon.

"If there's anything I'm proud of, it's the fact that I made it happen." He rises to his feet and starts pacing. "I made it after being rejected for 20 years. No: after being *buried*. I had 20 years of hitting my head against the wall. You follow me? It was like betting on something and always failing, failing, failing..." He punches the palm of his hand with each "failing". "But it's forced me to have huge respect for the craft. I'll give lines to other actors, I'll cast people who I know will steal scenes from me. It's really about the fact that I could die at any moment and if that's the last film I make... well, it had better be good."

'The Fast and the Furious' is released on 14 Sept

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Vin Diesel Talks T3 And Hellboy

31/08/2001

It's almost hard to believe that, in 1994, Vin Diesel found it so hard to find acting work, he was forced to write his own movie just to guarantee himself a part. Eight years later, after a series of increasingly high-profile roles, the formerly unemployed actor can now command a paycheck touching eight figures with a wave of his colossal hand. Catching Diesel while he was in town promoting his latest movie **The Fast and The Furious**, **Empire Online** took the opportunity to sit down with Hollywood's next action superstar to mull over a few of the mammoth roles that are now routinely thrust in his direction.

Recently tipped for the lead in Guillermo Del Toro's adaptation of demonic comic book hero **Hellboy**, Diesel hinted heavily that he may well be taking on the role but evaded attempts to pin down a definite confirmation, insisting: "they've told me to keep quiet about it."

"You know why I like Hellboy," muses Diesel. "I like Hellboy for the same reason I liked The Iron Giant. This guy's just ambivalent about his strength, he's like this cool guy who doesn't understand his strength and he goes through life like a bull in a china shop," he grins wickedly. "I love it."

After a recent meeting with Jonathan Mostow about a possible role in **Terminator 3** rumours ignited as fans imagined the possibilities of Diesel squaring off against Schwarzenegger as a killer cyborg. Similarly bound by orders to keep schtum, Diesel simply smiles knowingly and says: "I haven't seen the script yet."

One project he is allowed to talk about, however, is **Triple X** which will reunite him with **The Fast and The Furious** director Rob Cohen. *"I've been talking about this film a lot, I'm proud of this film,"* he says. Fortuitously, **Triple X** producer Neal Moritz happens past at this moment and Diesel summons him over to provide some details.

"Triple X is basically a kind of James Bond meets X Games," says Moritz. *"It's like a spy movie with the sensibilities of the X Games." For the uninitiated, X Games is best understood as the extreme sports Olympics, where possibly psychotic sportsmen and women compete in some truly hair-raising events.*

"I play a guy who's a nihilist," says Diesel. **"he's a former X Games champion, who's recruited by the CIA... and that's cool. He's a guy who starts out not giving a shit about anybody and begins to understand that that's not the answer."**

Finally, Diesel will be reprising the role of escaped convict and murderer Richard B Riddick in the upcoming sequel to **Pitch Black**, titled **The Chronicles of Riddick**. Returning to laconic form Diesel is in no hurry to divulge any details: **"I read the script and, suffice it to say, I like it a lot."**

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His first job in Hollywood was as a club doorman but now film star Vin Diesel is bouncing back \$10M DEAL IS DREAM COME TRUE

Europe Intelligence Wire
Source: The Sunday Mirror, September 02, 2001

DREW MACKENZIE IN NEW YORK

OUTSIDE Hollywood, hardly anyone has heard of Vin Diesel yet. But inside the back rooms of the top film studios, the hunky star of the blockbuster new car-race film **The Fast And The Furious** has become the most sought-after actor in town.

And after appearing in only a handful of films he's just signed an incredible contract worth \$10 million to star in **XXX**, an action adventure film that is expected to turn him into the new Bruce Willis.

He's also signed on to become Arnold Schwarzenegger's deadly adversary in **Terminator 3**.

Not only that, he's already proved his star power by turning his on-screen leading lady, sexy **Furious** co-star Michelle Rodriguez, into his off-screen lover.

In fact, he even has an entourage. I probably should hire somebody from my team to watch my dog, jokes Vin, who has little time these days to even walk his pet..

Incredibly, little more than three years ago he was working as a nightclub bouncer in New York when he was plucked from obscurity by Steven Spielberg to appear in his first film.

It's all a dream come true for 33-year-old Vin, although it's far from being an overnight success story.

Acting is the only thing I ever knew that I wanted to do, says Diesel.

People are designed differently and I think I was designed in a way that I needed to perform and work

out my things on camera.

It could also be said that he was also born to play a tough guy. With his bullet-like head, his bulging biceps and rippling abs, he has the perfect look for a Hollywood action star.

And unlike most movie heroes, he will admit sheepishly that he's actually thrown people around for real, though he's reluctant to talk about those darker times.

However, he adds: **"I'm not a violent person, at all.**

My years of bouncing taught me how to be a tough guy, but at the same time gave me the credibility that allows me not to be. I have the liberty of showing a softer side.

Growing up in Greenwich Village, Vin had to be tough or at least act tough. Half-black, half-Italian, with a touch of Irish, Dominican and Mexican thrown in, he never knew his biological father.

I have no overwhelming desire to meet him.

Vin, whose real name is Mark Vincent, has a twin brother who looks nothing like him - he's light-skinned with blue eyes and blond hair.

And until Vin became broad and muscular he was subject to some ridicule.

The twins and their younger sisters were raised by his mother, an astrologer and the man whom Diesel calls his dad - a theatre director and a teacher.

The family lived in a rented, small flat and were just glad to have food on the table. His upbringing, he says, made him the man he is today.

"There's a certain level of machismo that most New Yorkers have ingrained in their personality. The whole idea is to be as tough as possible.

"Some of the people I grew up with ended up in jail or were killed. I saw a lot of crazy things.

"My friend got his neck slit from ear to ear. Another friend got stabbed to death. Another friend got shot.

My parents were both very educated and always expressed the importance of education.

His father gave him a love of the theatre and by the age of seven he was acting at a local children's drama school.

I knew that acting was what I wanted to do. So I thought I should get on with it.

To leave his days open for auditions, he became a bouncer at the Tunnel club near his home.

Finally, he decided that the only way to make it in Hollywood was to move there and search for work. He borrowed some cash and took off, vowing to repay it all in 12 months.

But he admits: **"I bombed. I went out \$10,000 in debt and with no job.**

The only thing I knew how to do was bounce. I was there for about a year, and I came back with my tail between my legs.

After his mum gave him a book about how to make a movie on the cheap, he put together a short autobiographical film called Multi-Facial about a multi-racial actor contending with typecasting.

The film caught the eye of Steven Spielberg who immediately added Vin to the cast of Saving Private Ryan playing the soldier who dies first in the film while helping a sad little boy.

Vin then quickly made the jump to starring role as the cold-blooded anti-hero in the science fiction epic Pitch Black.

But it was his turn in Fast And The Furious playing a street racer that cemented his reputation as the next Willis or Sly Stallone. The film smashed the magic \$100 million mark.

Vin has bought himself a plush bungalow, complete with swimming pool of course.

Getting a house was a huge deal for me because my family always rented.

Pointing to his white T-shirt, black work boots and jeans, he adds: **Look at how I'm dressed. I'm wearing the same things I wore when I didn't have money.**

Vin Diesel promotes “ The Fast and The Furious” in Madrid, a film about illegal street car racing.

Steffi's version

The North American actor Vin Diesel to which whom Steven Spielberg made the role of Private Carpazo in “Saving Private Ryan”. Today he visited Madrid to present “The fast and The Furious” a film about illegal street racing, directed by Ron Cohen. Paul Walker, Michelle Rodriguez, Jordana Brewster, and Rick June among others complete the team of actors in the movie which premiers October 5.

This film shows the subculture of fixed up cars and illegal car racing. Cohen captures the story and the characters of the film, explains Diesel who with furiosity brings to live the character Dominic Torretto. In the film Torreto during the daytime owns and works in a garage where he fixes and puts together cars for the racing world. In the nightime he pilots his own racing car in where he makes bets of \$10.000 dollars per race. His team always backs him up, until Brian (Paul Walker) an undercover cop that is investigating a series of truck highjacking.

The “ multidimensional” of this character and the cars was what prompted Diesel to become part of this film. “ Cars and velocity have always fascinated me, when I was in College I use to drive a GSX-R. I use to drive at incredible velocities through Belt Parkway and the rest of the streets coming out of Manhattan.

Back then I was young and a risk taker and I loved the feeling of freedom the velocity gave, now I have more sense. Remembers the actor. The actors themselves, except for the dangerous ones, made almost all of the sequences of the movie.

“ Almost all the sequences were done by us, and then finished by the specialists to give it more aggression. Explained Diesel. Who now drives under the speed limit, since tickets don't appeal to him. Diesel who made his debut at the age of 7 in the theatre, and obtained his fame in the independent circuit, wanted to make clear that the role of the women in “The Fast and The Furious” was not only of decorative meaning.

For this actor also the protagonist in Pitch Black, “ the women in the film are special elements in the film capable of anything, including driving and winning a race.

The protagonist of “The Fast and The

GoldunAngel's version

American actor Vin Diesel, for whom Steven Spielberg wrote the character of private Carpazo in 'Saving Private Ryan', was visiting Madrid to present his latest movie, 'The Fast And The Furious', a film about underground racing directed by Rob Cohen. Paul Walker, Michelle Rodriguez, Jordana Brewster and Rick Yune, and others, complete the cast of this film, wich will open in Spain next month (oct 5).

"This movie shows what happens in the sub culture of underground racing and Cohen has taken especial care of the character and their stories", explains Diesel, who plays the role of Dominique Toretto, a guy that tests the cars during the day and drives his own car during the night, betting up to \$10,000 per race, always surrounded by his 'group'; that is until Brian (Paul Walker), a cop undercover shows up to investigate a series of truck highjacks.

The fact that Diesel's character (Dominic) was multidimensional, was what really attracted him to the movie and of course so did the cars. "I've always been facinated with cars and speed. When I was in college i had a GSX-R that i drove extremely fast by Belt Parkway and other Manhattan's streets.

I was very young and reckless and i loved the feeling of freedom that speed gives. Now i've became more careful, the actor remembered. Almost every stunt was done by the actors exept the more dangerous ones.

"We did almost every stunt and then they were done again by profetionals to give them more 'punch' or agresiveness", said Diesel, who drives under the velocity limits because he's not interested in speed tickets. Diesel, started acting at age 7 and adquire fame as an independent film director, also wanted to point out that the role of women in this film "wasn't just for decorative purpose".

For the actor, who started also in 'Boiler Room' and 'Pitch Black', "The women in this movie are all very special, they're not pasive, they're strong women, who are capable of winning races".

The star hopes that "The Fast and The Furious", very sucessful in North America, also

Furious”hopes that will be a hit, like it was in North America.“ I think that this movie will be well liked by people that are not attracted by cars oppose to those who are.” Said Diesel over a film that has enormous likeness to “ Point Break” a film started by Patrick Swayze and Keanu Reeves.

Diesel responsible for the short film “Multifacial” which was projected in Cannes in 1995, and of Stray selected in Sundance in 1997, denounce that there are good story lines. needed in Hollywood. “ The public is tired of special effects, they want to see characters to whom which they can identify themselves with, just like good story lines.” Declared the actor that at 25 yrs felt frustrated, and decided to write, direct and produce his own films.

“My frustration was the one that made me to write, and the necessity to direct them and produce them. The fact that two of my works were at two important festivals like Cannes and Sundance, was the opportunity for people to notice me and for my name to be heard in the independent circuit.” Said Diesel, who had the luck that one of the people to take notice of him was Steven Spielberg.

In this sense the actor related that his meeting with the director of ET, was one of “ fairytale, Hollywood style.”“ I had been calling to Hollywood’s door for some time and the one that open the doors to me was of the greatest directors, the god of the movies.” Concluded an interpreter that is recently rolling “ Knockaround Guys”, with Dennis Hopper and John Malkovick, and “Diablo” in which he is also an executive producer.

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can do well in Europe. "I believe that this movie can appeal to both, people that love the world of racing and those who don't like it".

Diesel, responsible for the short 'Multifacial' (it was presented in Cannes in 1995) and the film 'Strays' (was selected in Sundance in 1997), pointed out the lack of good roles in Hollywood. "The public is tired of special effects, they want to see characters that they can indentify with, as well as good stories, said the actor who felt fustrated at age 25 and decided to write, direct, produce and star in his own stories.

"My fustration as an actor made me write scripts and necessity made me direct and produce them.The fact that my two films were presented in two very important festivals made people notice me and made my name sound in the independent film world", said Diesel, who got lucky when one of the first people that thought of him was Steven Spielberg.

Regarding this, the actor described his encounter with the E.T. direcor as "a fairy tale" Hollywood style". "I spent a lot of time knocking doors in Hollywood and the one person that opened the door one fine day was one of the most important directors, the god of films", finished the actor who also finished recently shooting 'Knockaround Guys' with Dennis Hopper and John Malkovick, and 'Diablo' wich he also executive produced.

The explosive energy of Diesel

Sunday September 9th 2001

Vin Diesel, muscular star of The Fast and the Furious, talked to Ciara Dwyer about his career but she found herself distracted by his throatily sexy voice.

IF YOU were going to change your name to become a film star, there are a thousand names better than Vin Diesel. But that's what New York actor Mark Vincent decided on. God only knows why. It's a bizarre choice. Somebody gave Mark a bum steer when they said the new name sounded cool. But never mind the name; let's talk about the man and, more important, the voice. And what a voice ...

Vin Diesel's voice is so deep oh, so throatily deep it's more of an animal growl than anything else. Girls, have you ever woken up beside a man in the early morning when his voice is bass baritone with a touch of a sore throat? Well, that's what Vin's voice sounds like. All man. Vin speaks like Paul Robeson sings Old Man River.

Last week, Vin was in London to publicise his new film *The Fast and the Furious*. He swaggered into the room in a shiny grey silk suit and crisp white shirt. He looked like he had taken a trip or two to the gym.

Pumping iron does not always create beauty. Look at the stomach-churning bulk that is Arnold Schwarzenegger's body: clumps of rippling walnut muscles piled one on top of the other. Body-builders have thick rugby-player necks and bodies that look like they have been blown up to unnatural proportions. Grottesque. But the gym wasn't always such a harmful place. When the Greeks concentrated on body-building, their bodies were truly beautiful. Strong and muscular but not too colossal.

Vin's body is of the Greek variety. We forget that gyms can create objects of beauty. And that is what Vin was in his suit, his muscles bulging slightly through the fabric. Banish that blue thought. I am talking about his biceps. Honest.

But Vin Diesel is hardly a household name. Not yet. The actor is working his way up the Hollywood ladder. He was one of the ensemble cast in *Saving Private Ryan*. (But if you can remember all those faces, God bless your trainspotter memory.)

Last year, he was in a great film called *Boiler Room*, which was a Wall Street for the 21st century. But for some unjust reason, it went straight to video on this side of the world. Odd, that, as it was a fine film with a good plot, well-written dialogue and a sharp New York rap soundtrack. Last year, Vin joined the league of actors who have box-office clout when he starred in the science-fiction thriller *Pitch Black*. The film pulled in the punters don't ask me why and now Vin's profile is becoming bigger.

The Fast and the Furious is about a bunch of fellas who are street racers. Vin plays Dominic Toretto, the leader of the pack, who is a tough man with a sensitive side. It sounds a bit @@STYL po,0 cheesy and it would be were it not for Vin's acting skills. There is one scene where he is explaining how his father was killed when his racing car exploded. These days, it is not often that actors get to have speeches, but Vin does and he manages to pull it off.

The actor may be all brawn, and slightly thuggish-looking brawn at that, with his shaved head and bouncer physique, but he has brains too. Since the age of seven, Vin has been acting: "The first time I acted professionally was for \$20 in a theatre in New York city." There's more to that story than at first meets the eye he and his seven-year-old friends had broken into the theatre to vandalise it. A woman stopped them and offered them each a script and \$20, on the condition that they would attend every day after school. He went on to study English at Hunter College, with a special interest in creative writing.

Vin belongs to the breed of actors who believe in making things happen for themselves. He wrote, starred in, directed and produced a short film, *Multi-Facial*, which was shown in the 1995 Cannes Film Festival. His full-length feature film *Strays* was selected for the Sundance Film Festival in 1997.

The Cannes and Sundance festivals may give an actor serious film credibility, but *The Fast and the Furious* could undo all that. The characters are predictable, and I would imagine it's the sort of film which plays to men who relish the thrill of looking at racing cars revving. The rush is a mixture of testosterone and adrenalin. But when asked about the cars in the film, Vin is delightfully new to the automobile game.

"I grew up in New York city, so it was skateboards and trains for me. No one really had the money to have a car. When I was in college, I had a motorbike and I did ridiculous things like go 155 miles an hour. But *The Fast and the Furious* was a training ground about car culture. You definitely got the adrenalin rush."

I could complain that *The Fast and the Furious* will have a load of young fellas out racing on the roads, getting their buzz from the speed and the loud music. But Vin admits that he is the opposite to his character. It is not cars which give him his thrill; rather it is his craft.

"I think film gives me the adrenalin rush," he says, "the whole excitement of making something out of nothing, something collaborative."

Asked what sort of a car-man he is, Vin is vague about engines and models. He sees driving as more than mere transport. **"I think I need transportation time in LA to meditate. That's the one time you are completely alone. You can listen to what you want to listen to."**

I've always thought that you can tell a person from their eyes. Diesel's berry-brown eyes are interesting and alert. You can see that he is bright, that the boy has depth. *The Fast and the Furious* may not be a brilliant film, but when it comes to choosing his films, Diesel is curious about character and moral questions.

"My mother said it was interesting that I chose films that semi-question morality. She said that when I was a kid, when I was five years old, I would always ask her if this character trait was good or bad. Does this make me a good person? And I think this has manifested itself in the choices I've made."

Diesel is an interesting actor. I want to see what he'll do with his career. In the press conference, he was

thoughtful about his answers; sometimes he would pause and growl into the mike. And what a growl. Lucky the girl who wakes up to hear that.

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Vin Diesel

The ex-bouncer and the star of *The Fast And The Furious* gives Maxim a masterclass in understated mecane

The film's big on streetracing and souped up with sport cars. Are you a bit of a boy-racer?

I'm a New Yorker, so no, we don't have access to flash cars, but Dominic (his character) is very much a car person. He's the caretaker, the leader of a group of people, but racing provides him with serenity.

So when your character gets overexcited by the automobile action, does that mean you are actually faking it?

I don't know if you need to be a car person to play Dominic, the characters take on a life of their own in the film. I wanted to make him to come alive. Although you know he loves cars, he's ultimately about much more, which is taking care of the family and being the responsible one.

Rob Cohen said he sees you as the next line in to the action-hero genre, right behind Stallone and Schwarzenegger. Is that you want?

I want more. Its flattering because I've admired all those ageing action stars that we talk about. I'm a fan of their's, a loyal fan, but if you say would I be interested in doing big films like *Terminator* or *Mad Max* then yeah - as a kid I left the movie theaters feeling really really good.

Are big explosions and action scenes going to be a staple part of your career?

I would never do a film just because it was labelled a big action film. I wouldn't do a film thinking bombs and explosions would be enough to carry me through. If you see the work that I've done, even on an action film, I hope that you get the feeling that I'm treating it the same as I would a dramatic piece.

Presumably the ladies go for the action type?

That surprise me because I always had to work for whatever attractiveness I was able to off. It's bizarre now to be called sexy without having to work for it or without having to convince anybody of it. I don't know if I understand it yet, but it's definitively a good thing.

Do your years as a bouncer affect your acting in any way?

No, it definitively gives me a recourse to draw upon. When you are bouncing you have to be the most formidable person in the world - its a bit like acting.

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Diesel Power

Thanks to his physique and formidable screen presence, Vin Diesel has quickly become a major star. James Mottram talks to the driving force behind 'The Fast and the Furious'.

"The first action hero for the 21st Century", is how director Rob Cohen describes Vin Diesel, his male lead in runaway smash *The Fast and the Furious*. Following his appearance in *Saving Private Ryan* as Private Caparzo (a role created for him after Steven Spielberg saw the 1995 short film *Multifacial* that Diesel wrote, directed and starred in) and a charismatic performance as psychotic anti-hero Riddick in superior sci-fi frightener *Pitch Black*, the 34 year-old actor has been revving up to inherit the mantle from long-in-the-tooth action heroes like Schwarzenegger and Stallone.

It's not for nothing that Stallone's latest, the racing drama *Driven*, has stalled at the US box-office, while *The Fast and the Furious* has taken close to \$140 million. Unsurprisingly, though, Diesel believes there's more to

him than being seen as the successor to Arnie and Sly.

"It depends what that means," he says, when we meet at the Deauville Film Festival in France. **"I'm flattered by the fact that I could be compared to two men who have been the most successful in that genre. But I am an actor first, indisputably. The years before Steven wrote a role for me, I was an auteur out of necessity. My history absolves me from just being an action hero. I'm attempting to bring more to the table, more depth to my characters. I don't approach Saving Private Ryan any differently to The Fast and the Furious."**

The story of LA street-racers, much of the success of The Fast and the Furious – aside from its high-octane car stunts – can be attributed to the broad appeal of the New York-born Diesel, who plays the idolised driver Dominic Toretto. He seems born to play this muscle-bound man-of-few-words.

"Part of the luxury of film is being able to play a character who may appear glamorous," he says. **"I could take one aspect of my personality and make that the seed of the character. So when I look at a character like Dominic from The Fast and the Furious, I see a character who is strong, who is a caretaker. As an actor, you have to find a relationship with the character; I have to find the parallel with my own life."**

While Diesel might appear to be the strong, silent type, he is actually an eloquent interviewee, blessed with a keen intelligence. A tee-totaller who used to be a bouncer, he also has a physical presence that dominates the room as soon as he strides in.

But it's an occupation he has long-since left behind. An English graduate from Hunter College, he began writing screenplays soon after leaving. Following Multifacial with his first full-length effort, urban drama Strays, Diesel was set to fashion a career as a director – until Spielberg intervened.

"It was the highest form of validation. When I was in school, I wasn't the kid who was getting the awards. To be the subject of a Hollywood fairytale... after that experience, I started buying into all those old anecdotes of the old-time actors, like Clark Gable being discovered on a hay-cart. Nothing could be more outlandish than Steven writing a role for me."

For the moment, he has no plans to return to directing, though he has recently shot F. Gary Gray's Diablo, which he also executive produced with his own company, One Race Productions. In the bag too, is Knockaround Guys, a gangster comedy "in an American Guy Ritchie kind of way", which co-stars John Malcovich and Dennis Hopper. He will also re-unite with Rob Cohen for XXX, a punk-James Bond adventure that should confirm his star status.

"Right now, I'm like a kid in a candy shop," he grins. **"I'm being offered all these amazing roles, and it's just so hard to turn them down. That what I've had to do. I've had to turn down multiple roles."**

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The Fast And The Furious Vin Diesel interview The star of this week's new release The Fast And The Furious talks to Virgin.net about his up and coming career.

What was the appeal of The Fast And The Furious for you?

"Intuition is a large part of my process. The Fast And The Furious is what I call a studio-generated script. This film was greenlit from an article in Vibe magazine, so the script had to be pulled together. I signed on because of a conversation I had with [director] Rob Cohen. He said, 'Describe to me the shot where the camera goes through [my character] Dom into the car and out the exhaust.' That was the one visualisation that I needed to be invested in the film".

Your character, Dominic, is very much the strong, silent type. Are you like that yourself?

"I think we as human beings are much more complex than any character that has ever been portrayed on film. Part of the luxury of film is being able to play a character who may appear glamorous. I could take one aspect of my personality and make that the seed of the character.

"So when I look at a character like Dominic from The Fast And The Furious, I see a character who is strong, who is a caretaker. As an actor, you have to find a relationship with the character".

Rob Cohen has called you "the 21st Century's first new action hero", comparing you to the likes of Schwarzenegger and Stallone. How does that feel?

"It depends what that means. I'm flattered by the fact that I could be compared to two men who have been

the most successful in that genre. That's extremely flattering. I am an actor first, indisputably. The years before Steven Spielberg wrote a role for me, for Saving Private Ryan, I was an auteur out of necessity. My history absolves me from just being an action hero. I'm attempting to bring more to the table, more depth to my characters. I don't approach Saving Private Ryan any differently to The Fast And The Furious".

You mentioned you began as a writer-director, with your feature Strays. Will you direct again?

"Right now, I'm like a kid in a candy shop. I'm being offered all these amazing roles, and it's just so hard to turn these roles down. That's what I've had to do. I've had to turn down multiple roles. I can't direct right now, because you're looking at nine to 12 months for just dedicating yourself to something".

How did it feel knowing Spielberg was creating a role for you?

"It is the highest form of validation. When I was in school, I wasn't the kid who was getting the awards. I didn't get the best-dressed award. To be the subject of a Hollywood fairytale... after that experience, I started buying into all those old anecdotes of the old-time actors, like Clark Gable being discovered on a hay-cart. Nothing could be more outlandish than Steven writing a role for me".

How was the experience of working with Spielberg?

"When I got on the plane to go do Saving Private Ryan, I was handed the script before I got on. The role didn't exist in the script; I wasn't thinking about the role I would play. I was thinking about watching Steven work. I would have gone out there to shine his shoes, as a young film-maker.

"His way of directing is very efficient. He's brilliant at knowing what lens to use to capture a mood. With the confidence he has, he's brilliant at making a gesture turn into a beautiful scene.

"Also what I learnt from Steven Spielberg, is that the most confident directors are the most receptive. On the first day of film-making, he took the script and said 'This is just a blue-print! Any ideas you have then come forward.' Here's the guy with more accolades than anyone I know, and more money than God. And he's receptive? I got why he was receptive; although his budgets are high, he wanted to make magic. After all the success, all he wants to do is make magic. If that's what he's going for, that must be the thing to go for".

Are you much of a party-goer when you're back home?

"I haven't had a drink in two and a half years. I'm one of those people that wants to do everything in his power to be as good as possible to try to master a craft. If I feel, whether right or wrong, that drinking alcohol at this time in my life could hinder me at all, I will drop that. I feel more in tact without it. I feel like I'm able to be more in tune with my emotions.

"I don't get to escape like I did when I used to drink. I was never a heavy drinker, because of my years of bouncing. I bounced six nights a week. As a bouncer you can't drink. It's an amazing training ground for handling people. It's an amazing training ground for being effective in speech. I try to learn as much as I can from every experience, and I believe I learnt a lot from that. You learn how to read people from bouncing. I've had friends who've had their neck slit from here to here, from reading a person wrong. It's a survival skill".

You've just completed Knockaround Guys, with Dennis Hopper and John Malkovich. Is it more of a comedy?

"Yeah, in an American Guy Ritchie kind of way. In a post-Tarantino kind of way".

And you're about to work with Rob Cohen again, on "punk James Bond" film XXX?

"Yeah. It's tricky because the hardest thing to do is to get that role in XXX. I wanted it. That's what I've been presented with, so it's hard for my agent to understand that. I'd do a musical if I could. I'd do a re-make of My Fair Lady if they'd let me!"

You're reputedly a big Lord Of The Rings fan. How did it feel not to be a part of that?

"If there's any tragedy that exists in modern times, it was the fact that I was not a part of Lord Of The Rings. Had I had the power, that I soon hope to acquire, I would've been... I'm not even going to tell you what I would've been!"