

Interview Collection Part 6

AN INTERVIEW WITH VIN DIESEL

2004-Feb
Game Informer Magazine

In just a few short years, Mamma Diesel's boy has gone from a total unknown to one of the biggest names in Hollywood. His short film, Multi-Facial, which he wrote, directed and starred in, caught the attention of Steven Spielberg, who added a part for him in Saving Private Ryan. Since then, he's starred in films like XXX, The Fast and the Furious, and Boiler Room. He's also a huge video game fan, and took some time to talk with us about his upcoming title.

You're a self-professed video game fanatic What do you look for in a game?

interactive escapism.

What games are you currently playing?

I am thoroughly enjoying Soul Calibur II and Medal of Honor: Rising Sun.

How is your video game company, Tigon Games, involved in Riddick?

As a producer of COR and having worked on the film for 5 years, I was able to bring insight to the world of Riddick I wanted to make sure that there was a consistency between the movie and the game. It was an incredible opportunity to work with Vivendi Universal Games and a very innovative developer, Starbreeze. I wanted the quality of the film experience to carry over into the game

What is the current status of the first announced Tigon Games release, Perrone?

Some really great stuff, I just can't talk about it. Sorry.

It's said that you take your voiceover work very seriously. Is there any difference between doing voiceovers for movies and games? How do you approach your voice work?

I take my voiceover work very seriously. In the case of Iron Giant, I would go home and not be able to talk for hours. Voiceover work for games or animation is easier as an actor because you don't have to match to pre-existing shot footage, as you do in ADR for film. The important thing is to breathe life into a character. The challenge is to convey all the nuances and layers of a complex character through voice only. Because I have lived and breathed the Riddick character for so long now, due to the film, preparing for the voiceover work was more about ensuring Riddick's entire dialogue was perfectly 'on-model'. I spent several hours with the game's dialogue writers polishing Riddick's lines and helping to communicate what his motivation, actions, and reactions would be in the set of circumstances he finds himself in during this game.

With the release of the game and the new movie, do you think Riddick will become one of the classic sci-fi series?

I'm a guy who grew up playing Dungeons & Dragons obsessively - preferably as a "Half Drow Witch Hunter"- so I'm a fan of the fantasy world. David Twohy, who understands science fiction better than most guys I know, and I wanted to create a fantasy-like mythology combining the best of the sci-fi and fantasy worlds to create a universe, or multiple universes, that we would want to interact with. Everyone involved in the game and movie really got into that. We were determined to give audiences every opportunity to dive deeper and deeper into these characters and worlds.

Will people who haven't seen the movie(s) get into the game?

Anyone who plays through this game will have important information that pertains to the movie, as well as backstory that was previously unrevealed. However, the game simultaneously works as a self-contained product. This game has raised the bar for first-person shooters and is using technology and a level of graphics unseen in any console game prior. So ultimately it's going to be a great game to play, which is really the point of doing a game that can stand independent of the movie or enhance and add to the moviegoing experience. The game actually takes place before Pitch Black and Chronicles of Riddick, in the toughest prison in the universe - Butcher Bay. Well, toughest prison at that time. It's a story driven first-person shooter, with a heavy dose of intelligent puzzle solving and adventuring.

Do you feel like the game and the new movie are two parts of the same project, or are they two separate but equal projects?

The game actually started to be developed before we had a script for Chronicles because everyone felt that Riddick is a perfect character for a video game. It was also a great opportunity to build our backstory. As the movie started to come together, we began enhancing the game and bringing in extra components that would build the overall storyline and would give players of the game some additional insight into what is happening in the films. These are separate projects that are components of a much larger story.

What are your thoughts about who Riddick is? Why do people like such a bad guy?

Riddick doesn't subscribe to anyone else's rules or religion. He gets through life his own way, and, sometimes, as you'll see in the game and the movie, it ain't pretty. He has to do what he has to do.

Will those who play the game get more out of the new movie than those who don't?

Yes. Those who play the game will get a deeper understanding of the universe. They'll spend more time with Riddick in exile, they'll get more details as to the origin of his eyes, and they'll see him come closer to understanding who he is and why he does the things that he does.

How do you think Riddick will compare to some of the other megareleases, like Doom 3 and Halo 2?

I think Riddick will definitely deliver an experience that will appeal to players of the games you mentioned, but like any project, it should be judged on its own merits. It will look, feel, sound and play great, and really, that is all players care about.

Do you think Riddick will be seen as "that Vin Diesel game"?

No, I don't. Just like a movie, there are many talented artists who come together and contribute to create the gaming experience. I think when people play this game they will acknowledge all the talented people involved. It may be referred to as the incredible Vivendi Universal game or the showstopping Starbreeze game or the first Tigon game!

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Diesel roars into vid games

Chris Marlowe
The Hollywood Reporter
Feb. 24, 2004 05:05 PM

Vin Diesel has taken the wraps off his video game company Tigon Studios, the enterprise he first hinted at more than a year ago.

Fans of the actor-producer grabbed on to a tidbit of news he let slip during a promotional tour for the DVD release of "XXX," when Diesel also acknowledged being a lifelong gamer. At the time, he said he was thinking of establishing his own studio and releasing an action-adventure game using the working title of "Perrone."

But nothing more was revealed except that Tigon was named after biologists' moniker for the offspring of a male tiger and a female lion.

On Monday, it was confirmed that Diesel had established Tigon under CEO Cos Lazouras, who was previously known as the producer of Fox Interactive's "Planet of the Apes" and other games. Tigon will work with outside development teams to create the actual titles. It is self-financed, with an established panel of strategic investors available.

Diesel said he wanted to **"embrace the medium of our generation"** and will be very hands-on.

Rob Sebastian, managing director of Endeavor's games and technology group, created Tigon's business plan with Diesel and his team. *"The value of Tigon is that it's not a vanity vehicle,"* Sebastian said. *"Vin has a legitimate and passionate interest in creating for this medium. He wants to create another entertainment experience beyond the 120 minutes available on a movie screen."*

Diesel's personal involvement will be important, according to analysts, since the actor's connection will boost Tigon's chances but will not provide any guarantees. *"Having Vin Diesel's name attached to the game will certainly help generate awareness for this Hollywood-licensed movie, but at the end of the day, this game's success relies on the success of the movie,"* said P.J. McNealy, senior analyst, American Technology Research.

Diesel believes that any game needs to stand on its own merits, regardless of whether it has a movie tie-in.

"As a producer, I am very involved in all of the creative aspects of the game, looking for innovative game play, developing story lines, writing dialogue, attaching actors, designing visuals and directing cinematics," Diesel said. **"I also have been very fortunate in that I have the ability to get other incredible artists from the film and music worlds to lend their voices, talent and excitement to these games."**

He is contributing his own likeness and voice talents to the first game from the young company, "The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay." Other stars from the movie are involved as well, but

Diesel declined to say who.

"Chronicles" is being created by Swedish developer Starbreeze, best known for the popular first-person shooter game "Enclave."

The game is a prequel to 2000's sci-fi thriller "Pitch Black" and incorporates characters from both that movie and the upcoming "Chronicles of Riddick" film, due out June 11.

It relates the back story of antihero Riddick and explains how he obtained his special abilities, which include a power called "eyeshine" that allows him to see in pitch-black darkness.

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Diesel-powered Riddick The Chronicles of Riddick

[Starburst Magazine](#)

2004 June

We go head to head with the toughest guy in the universe, Vin Diesel, and find out how much of a blast it is for him to return to his Pitch Black character Riddick.

The man in the grey goggles spins around, and, in a fluid motion another couple of bodies hit the dark lava surface of the planet Crematoria. His weapons like twin hand-held scythes, flash and spin, dispatching the mercenaries and guards emerging from Crematoria's underground prison, the Slam. If he seems in a hurry, it's because Crematoria is a planet of extremes – by night, -300° Fahrenheit, rising to over 700° by day. At twilight, our hero – intergalactic mass murderer Richard B Riddick – has exactly 30 minutes to get from the Slam to a hidden mercenary ship that he intends to escape in. With the number of people trying to prevent him from doing just that, there's a reason Riddick's blades are used with such expertise.

But in the scheme of things, wouldn't a gun work better?

"Well, Riddick is more of a blade man – a shiv man – probably because that's all he's had access to most of his life," explains the man behind Riddick's goggles, the shaved-bald and well-muscled Vin Diesel. "So, if he was locked in some cave for a long period of time, if he could somehow fabricate a blade, that's what he was practising with. It's almost as if these blades dance around his hands. That's how proficient he is with the blade, so that's his weapon of choice. Does he fire a couple of shots? Yeah, but it's always second to his very obvious love for blades."

"I always knew that I wanted to explore the Riddick character and realized that the most exciting thing to do would be to explore the universe around Riddick," Diesel enthuses. "We know who Riddick is – he doesn't promise to save anybody, he has a lack of identity due to the fact he was never raised in a conventional way. He has abandonment issues and he just wants to be left alone. I love the idea of a guy who potentially could be so heroic, but because of his experiences and his outlook on life, isn't A: aware of what heroism is and B: probably isn't aware of anything outside of basic survival. It's often said on set, what makes this all the more challenging is that we're not just making a movie – we're making a universe. Post-World War II, we had Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings as our mythology to buy into and then, in the Seventies, we had Star Wars.

Our concept was to create a mythology that would take three films to explain, three films to adventure in, and a story that would take three films to tell."

In The Chronicles of Riddick, our hero leaves his snow world and finally returns to the world of civilization. On the way he makes a pit stop to rescue his old Pitch Black-surviving friend Jack aka Kyra (Alexa Davalos) from the lava planet prison on Crematoria on the way to Helion Prime, the site of New Mecca, where Imam (Keith David) was venturing towards way back in Pitch Black.

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Diesel Revs Up 'Riddick's' Engine

[ZAP2it.com](#)

Sun, May 16, 2004, 12:05 PM PT

By Vanessa Sibbald

Vin Diesel sounds like he's in love and the object of his affection is -- Dame Judi Dench. It isn't so much a romantic love, but instead, the kind one has for an idol.

Working with Dench on their upcoming film "The Chronicles of Riddick," was "like a dream come true," Diesel tells Zap2it.com from the set of his latest project, "The Pacifier" in Toronto. "People would ask me, 'Who do you want to work with?' five years ago and I'm saying, 'Judi Dench!' And they're like, 'Judi Dench? I thought you were going to say Michael Bay,'" he laughs.

It's not the first time during the interview where he laughs at people's miscomprehension of his image. Clearly, there's more than just an action star under Diesel's bulked-up muscles. Among other things, he's an old Dungeons and Dragons fan, who loves playing with kids and whose other dream project is directing a film about the 3rd century Carthaginian general Hannibal. But back to "Riddick," the sequel to the surprise 2000 hit "Pitch Black," one of the first films that brought Diesel to audiences' attention.

It turns out that it was Diesel himself, who is producing the film as well as starring in it, who talked the English Dame into taking the role of Aeron, a character that he describes as "a powerful presence in the film that opens it up and gives it a certain understandable significance." During foreign press for "XXX," the last film Diesel shot before taking a short break and entering the 7-month production schedule for "Riddick" (both "A Man Apart" and "The Knockaround Guys" were shot before "XXX"), the actor flew to England to see Dench in a play with Maggie Smith -- "another brilliant actress."

"I started the relationship by going out and seeing her perform and I guess, as an actor, that's the best way to do it," he says, adding that, after the performance he went backstage and "did my best to charm her."

Apparently, it worked. But as Dench came onboard, Diesel and writer/director David Twohy realized that, in a way, the stakes had been raised. Now they had an opportunity to create something really special.

"Once you got Judi Dench, it just meant that you had to stay committed to making the script and each moment as soundproof as possible," Diesel explains. "Just because it's such a luxury, and for me a dream, and such a coup for the picture to have such a marvelous actress. If you were going to have that marvelous actress in the film, make it as incredible as you can -- never stop thinking about it."

Fans expecting "Pitch Black 2" may be surprised to find a whole new mythology in place for "Riddick," which explores the background of the optically enhanced character -- but doesn't follow the same structure of the first film.

"We all know how shy I am about sequels -- I'd be much richer if I wasn't -- so this couldn't be 'Pitch Black 2.' There's 'Pitch Black,' there's no reason to do 'Pitch Black 2,' he says. "'Pitch Black' was about dealing with those character in the present, under those very specific and immediate conditions. 'The Chronicles of Riddick' is an exploration of everything outside of that one planet and that kind of mythology that lives in the future."

Turns out, the partnership between Twohy, whose other credits include "The Arrival" and "Below" as well as the screenplays for "Warlock," "Terminal Velocity" and "The Fugitive," and Diesel is not likely to end soon. While Diesel wouldn't say if a second sequel is confirmed, he did say that they have "two other stories" about Riddick that follow "Chronicles."

"The cool thing about David and I working together is that David is a sci-fi guy and I'm a fantasy guy," says Diesel. "David has written these incredible science fiction pictures and I've spent my life playing Dungeons and Dragons and living in the world of fantasy."

But Diesel's real baby is "Hannibal," an epic story about the Carthaginian general who rode an elephant across the Alps to attack Rome in the 3rd Century B.C., which the actor is not only producing, but will star in and hopes to direct.

"I'm dying to direct this," he says, adding that he's presently going over conception art for the film. "I see the images in my head. When we have story meetings I end up acting out scenes -- it's my favorite story to tell."

The project is one that Diesel has been talking about since doing "XXX," although it now has a screenplay courtesy of David Franzoni ("King Arthur," "Gladiator"), who adapted it for the screen from a novel by Ross Leckie. Until Diesel sets a start date for the project (and investors come on board), he is keeping himself busy shooting "The Pacifier," Adam Shankman's ("Bringing Down the House") new comedy about a Navy S.E.A.L. who is assigned to protect the five children of a recently deceased government scientist.

"Literally, it's heaven working with these kids because I'll go through a whole scene with an 8 month old baby on my lap, smiling at me and wanting me to play with him -- it's so adorable! It's so easy to lose all the cool stuff behind when you're playing with these babies because I'm walking around the set lifting this baby up going, 'Whee!'" Diesel laughs.

"The Chronicles of Riddick" opens nationwide Friday, June 11.

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Coming Soon interview transcript

Transcript thanks to jjewels1012!

VD: Hey

C: Vin.

VD: How are ya Chuck?

C: Hey. Pretty good. You must be very busy because people are really excited about this movie

VD: They really are.

C: Well, especially me b/c you know I'm a big fan of "Pitch Black" and I...

VD: cool.

C: One of my things though I'm really tired of movie trailers showing to much. So, I actually watched the trailer just recently and I was.. my jaw hit the floor. This, the scale of this thing is huge.

VD: Huge.

C: And the sets were just amazing and I saw a little bit, they also sent me a little behind the scenes of it and that was the first thing that struck me was how big the sets were..... obviously these sets were built just for the film.

VD: Yeah it was very easy to lose yourself in the world when you would walk up. You you... We lived on these stages that were enormous. A place called Mammoth Studios in Vancouver. We wouldn't have been able to house all of the construction and all the stages in Universal. Yeah we literally had to find this like colossal stage, but it was all contained. You had to like ride on a scooter or bicycle from one end of the set to the other.

C: I find this to be interesting from what I understand from talking to you before and what I know about the Riddick and and and "Pitch Black" is we're going to see a whole mythology here with

VD: Yea

C: the Riddick character.

VD: Yeah Sure.

C: Now, so, but in the case of and I'm going to compare this to the "Lord of The Rings" where we had the "Hobbit" versus the "Lord of the Rings" I know a lot of people that have seen and read the "Lord of The Rings", but have not read the Hobbit, which I don't understand. Will people understand the Riddick character if they haven't seen "Pitch Black"?

VD: Yes, and lets just say that's 100% right. There are lots of people who have seen the "Lord of The Rings" and wouldn't even know what the "Hobbit" was, right. So I think one of the objectives of making this mythology was to find a way to make sure that everybody had enough information to follow the mythology

C: I see.

VD: Um, and that was you know about introing the mythology the right way, giving you enough factoids so that you'd understand, exploring and exhausting all the other options to flesh out the universe, whether it's a 5 minute cinematic , in a video game, or it's on the website. Have you seen the website?

C: No I haven't. I know I'm a loser. I act.... (laughs)

VD: No no. (laughs) So, so you just really... you know understand what I'm saying and you do, you need to if you are creating a mythology like this take advantage of all the different avenues to add information or to flesh out this universe. Because if you're and the cool thing about this movie is if your just going to have fun and be entertained, you can go and have fun and be entertained. If you are going to engage and loose yourself in this universe even you know outside the movie experience you can further explore into this universe with websites, with the video games, Allen D Foster wrote a novels. Peter Chung his artistic image to the Chronicles. That's what's cool about creating this universe.

C: Well, we were real excited at comingsoon.net and we actually posted a board notifying everybody that we were going to be talking to you about the "Chronicles of Riddick" and people put all kinds of questions up there, so I thought we'd go through some of these fans questions, so they can get right to the.... and there are some really die hard fans out there obviously by their questions. But we'll start with some of the simpler ones. A guy by the name of Brock Lander says "What do you like most about the character of Riddick?"

VD: His, his self assured. His confidence. His ability to reduce everything to some primitive level, you know, now I'm going to end up getting really deep.

C: Well no, I mean I look at the character as being primitive just like if you look at the actions what I know about "Pitch Black" it's like this character is primal and it just an an..... yeah and that's what I like about it and then of course it's all about this guy is a bad guy, this guys a murderer, but he also, I don't know whether he is going to change or what he's all about, but there seems to be so much about his past that and hopefully by going into future movies we are going to get see... to tap into that primal...

VD: Yeah. Yeah and you know he's a complex character. And as an actor that is he is a complex character with a very simple truth. Don't bother me and I won't bother you.

C: Yeah, I pretty much, just wants to be just wants to be left alone.

VD: Left alone. Leave me alone you know, I'm not gonna. I won't kill anybody, but please leave me alone.

C: Or I will.

VD: Or you know I can't be held accountable

C: Right exactly, now Sue Lee posted a question "How much involvement, if any, did you have with the storyline of the game, the sequel and the animated feature?"

VD: A lot of input into the story of it all. A lot of input on the story on the game. And a lot of input obviously on the movie. You know I think I was the first person to think about doing "The Chronicles of Riddick" If you read some of the interviews that you probably did years ago you'll hear me say the chronicle os riddick at a time when that would have to be followed with an explanation of what I was talking about.

C: I'm actually quite excited for the game too because universal does a great job of , if you caught, they just the one the movie they just did it was... and the name just eluded me. Uh uh Hugh Jackmon. But that game is fantastic. There is so much detail with the movie going into that game, I'm hoping they did the same with Riddick.

VD: Oh my God, wait til you see this game. This game I started a video game company two years ago just to make this game as good as it possible can

C: Ah, there's nothing better than having a game that its your game your involved with it you know it's going to be top of the line

VD: Yeah, I'm so excited about the It the most anticipated game on X-box.

C: Yeah, absolutely and I was a jump ahead, I saw a question and I'll get to it in a little bit, somebody asked a question about that. Why is it only being... Oh it was Tsheva asked "Why is only being put on X-box and not on Playstation too."

VD: We are working on it. That's a question that I have.

C: I have both systems. My answer would be go out and buy both systems because you gonna want to play this game. You know what I mean?

VD: Yeah, we're trying to get the PS2 game by Christmas.

C: Excellent

VD: To release with the DVD.

C: Now Ty Roth posted "It's been said that you'd been given your choice of any actress to work with and you chose Dame Judi Dench. So why did you pick Judi?"

VD: Because as an actor I have been a huge fan of Judi Dench for a you know, many many years. In fact, I talked like 5 years ago, while I was first doing interviews for "Saving Private Ryan" in 98 When I started I talked about wanting to work with Judi Dench. And this was a perfect opportunity because I needed.

C: I mean you're your pretty intimidating I would say even a heavy actor yourself when your, seems to me that I would be intimidated beyond measure if I was even trying to act against Dame Judi

Dench. Did you have that problem?

VD: Well, I, she is so wonderful. Um, she doesn't..... she instills confidence. It's a tenth of who she is as an artist. She is so confident.

C: And what is her character in the movie?

VD: She plays a character named Aereon. She's an air elemental ambassador. She is from the elemental counsel, a counsel constructed by various elementals to monitor and maintain a balance of the universe. It's a very old position. You have to see the character.

C: Yea. Well I saw a good bit of her on the trailer and it looked very impressive looked very impressive.

VD: Yeah, she's super cool.

C: We got some hardcore question her from Bruce L, He says "The trailers and the media show that you are using several different blades in the Chronicle of Riddick. What kind of training did you do to develop Riddick's knife fighting style?"

VD: We created a style that at the base was... at base was constructed from or influenced or created from a style of fighting called Kali. K-A-L-I. This is a fighting style that Brad Allen, who was our fight coordinator, who is brilliant, found in the Philippines, it was initially a knife combat style that the Spanish traitors brought over to the Philippines, but we've never seen this, no ones ever seen this kali fighting style. So, we were lucky enough to use that as the base of Riddick's fighting style because if Brad Allen, who is the combat coordinator, is so committed to it that he is designing the augmented fighting style for seq 2 right now.

C: The same guy Bruce L also asked, " The main antagonist in the movie are called necromongers. Can you describe what their cult like faith is all about?"

VD: They are very very very..... they have a very simple faith. Which is convert or die. Convert be a part of this Army that is going to that is headed for the underverse which you'll have to see the film to-----

C: Ok. M-I-N-X flick, I can't pronounce their screensame they wanted to know about how you felt about the efforts to rate the "Chronicles of Riddick" down to PG-13 and how do you feel it will effect the audience that it will appeal to bearing in mind that it's almost a dark "Star Wars" and not for children and there's been an alienation of your adult fan base from the R-rated "Pitch Black"?" Boy that's a lot there.

VD: Yeah, no I think that this film works as a pg film. I think that you you know that have been talks about making the first one pg, the second one R, and the third one pg. And the reason is because where you travel to in seq two is so dark and grotesque you wouldn't be able to do it PG.

C: Ok

VD: But when your setting up the mythology and doing it so that it's this large a scope. I, it's very hard to ask the studio to make it an rated R film. So what we compromised in gore we made up for in scope and beauty. I I actually don't think we compromised anything. It was very fortunate to be able to contain this in a PG rating.

C: Brue L also asks " has there been any progress Kara on the television series based on the Jack Kara based character from Pitch Black and the Chronicles.?"

VD: We're working on it now.

C: Oh ok.

VD: Still in development.

C: So, we're running out of time here and since the website is comingsoon.net we keep hearing reports that you are going to star in the Pacifier next?

VD: I am shooting the Pacifier.

C: Yeah and that Adam Shankman right?

VD: ----- yeah.

C: This is a different type of movie for you.

VD: Completely different.

C: (laughs) yeah

VD: I've gone from blades to babies.

C: Yeah, yeah I know, but I'm anxious to see that b/c I'm

VD: funny

C: You're a well rounded actor. I mean we could see. I mean and somebody asked later on in the question if we are ever going to see you in a romance and I think apparently they never saw how romantic you were in "A Man Apart"

VD: Thank you

C: I'm like what's up with that this guy can really show us his ranks.

VD: Thank you

C: Now what about these reports that Finding Me Guilty and Guys and Dolls?

VD: I'm at that place right now where I'm talking to Spike Lee about Joe Louis----. That movie I'm wanting to do, more than any other film I'm wanting to do Hannible the Conquer as a multi lingual film. Which as you know is pretty embassies.

C: and risky I think

VD: and risky

C: If anybody can pull it off I think it's you Vin.

VD: Thank you

C: I a I even hate to ask this question Fast and the Furious 3 what's going on. Paul swore to me at the Junket Vin;s gonna do it. Vin's gonna do it and I just wanted to slap him. I'm like you know cuz he talks such trash about you at 2.

VD: I know

C: then 3 I'm like dude don't tick off Vin Diesel. If you know what's good for you. And then it's just like I keep hearing these reports like oh he's gonna do it he's gonna do it. I'm like he' not gonna ado it.

VD: You know I mean. I heard that I was doing Terminator 3.

C: (laughing) I heard that too.

VD: I, it's the industry that we're in

C: Yeah

VD: You gotta hear it from the horses mouth and everyone knows that I've been chronically shy of sequels. But it's a you know.... story driven. It's gotta be story driven. It's gotta be... there are so many great scripts. I want to do a good solid project.

C: And I don't consider these sequels, I mean the Chronicles is just that. I mean I hope this is going to be a story that needs to be told fully in three parts os that we have something to go for.

VD: I agree.

C: And are you going.....

VD: and we are not being reactionary. We're not saying Oh this film made a lot of money lets flop something together put that title on it

C: Right

VD: lets flop something together put that title on it and get it out there. That's not fun. It's only fun if it is fun for all of us.

C: Now are you the only one that knows what is going to happen in the third one? I mean I'm jumping all the way to the third one b/c I know, come on, I've seen the trailer . This movie is going to be huge and we're going to want to see more of these we're gonna want to see more than three. But are, do you have it all figured out? Do you know exactly what's going on?

VD: Let's put it this way. There is a line, I can't tell you who this actress is but there is a line that you will hear later that goes something like this "WE did not awaken him to save your world. We awakened him to save ours"

C: AHHHHH I love it!!!! Love it!!!

VD: And when you see that, when you see the ----- When you see that ----- collision it's going to be

colossal. But that's.. you got to wait until after we return from the journey that we are about to go to in seq 2, which I can't really into, but oh I want too.

C: I know, I know. Well, Vin I am so jacked to see this movie and I know the fans of comingsoon.net are. Thank you for taking our... going over our time limit for us.

VD: My pleasure. My pleasure.

C: Bye

VD: See ya buddy

Riddick's Diesel Wooed Dench

26-May-04

[SciFi.com](#)

Vin Diesel, who reprises his most famous role in the upcoming SF epic film *The Chronicles of Riddick*, told SCI FI Wire that he personally lobbied to get Judi Dench to take a role in the movie, an unorthodox choice for her. "I flew out to London and I saw a stage performance that she did with another lovely actress named Maggie Smith," Diesel said in an interview. "And I started courting her. Just begged and pleaded and said, 'You know, this character was written for you, and you are this character. This is how we want to play.' And she was so into it."

Diesel, a fan of *Dungeons & Dragons* and other fantasy stories, found a kindred spirit in the esteemed British actress. "In Vancouver [where *Riddick* was shot], we would have dinner together and, like two kids playing in this whole universe, [we'd] talk about different [things]," Diesel said. "I mean, she's just remarkable. No one would ever expect that [she] and I would have a conversation that is so fantasy-based. A conversation you might have had with a friend after watching Ralph Bakshi's *Lord of the Rings*, you know what I mean? ... Really, really, really cool."

Diesel, who also acts as a producer on *Riddick*, said that he went so far as to make the casting of Dench as the "air elemental" Aeron a top priority. "I mean, ... I couldn't imagine anyone [else] being [cast] until Judi Dench was," he said. "I kind of made that a point. It was very, very important to me to have Judi Dench play the role of Aeron." He added, "She is a fan of [SF&F]. ... I mean, she hasn't spent her life playing *Dungeons & Dragons*, but you know, theater is, at the core, mythology-based. We can go through the numerous Shakespeare [plays]. ... It just goes on forever, the mythological references thematically in many of the plays and stuff that she's been doing forever."

Diesel added that his only regret was that he wasn't able to get Dench involved in a game of his beloved D&D. "Like I said, she doesn't play *Dungeons & Dragons*, and she doesn't necessarily play video games. But she's intrigued." Did he try to get her to play? "Almost," he said. "If it was up to me, I would have." *The Chronicles of Riddick*, the follow-up movie to *Pitch Black*, opens June 11.

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INT: Vin Diesel

May. 28, 2004

Source: [JoBlo.com](#)

by: Mike Sampson

Vin Diesel is just about one of the nicest guys you could interview. I had that inkling the first time I met him, when he was out promoting *A MAN APART*. He was wiped out, I mean completely spent from about three days straight of press and traveling cross-country. I was his last stop. But he came in, took his sportcoat off, clapped his hands together and never took a seat. He bounded through the room like a little kid on a sugar high. This time further cemented that fact in my mind.

Case in point: I've done a whole lot of interviews since I started here at JoBlo.com. I can count on one hand the amount of times the talent has been on time. I can count on one finger the amount of times the talent has actually made a point to tell you they were going to be late and to apologize in advance. That one time was just last week with Vin Diesel. He knew he was running late so he called me at home and asked if we could push the interview back a half-hour. True to his word, he called back at our newly scheduled time, right on the money.

I had the disadvantage of not being able to see *THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK* before this interview and normally that'd be the kiss of death. But not with Vin. After about two minutes I forgot I was interviewing Vin

Diesel and thought I was talking to one of my friends. And after reading this interview I think you'll feel like a friend of Vin's too (I mean how many big-time action stars can you talk about "Dungeons & Dragons" and "The Legend of Zelda" with?!). So read on. THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK opens in theaters on June 11th.

Hey Vin.

Hey Mike.

So how're you doing?

I'm doing good.

You must be doing good. This is a project that's been long-in-the-making. Must feel good to finally get it out.

It does feel good, Mike. It does feel good...

How long has it been since you first starting developing RIDDICK?

Umm, a few years. It started on the set of PITCH BLACK in '98. I was thinking about this crazy title, THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK.

This is all came about just from a title you thought about?

Mm-hmm.

Where did it go from there and how did you involve David Twohy? How does that work when you have two creative minds working on a project?

Well, they initially went to David Hayter and Akiva Goldsman...

They being Universal?

Right, the studio. They were wonderful scripts but I think David Twohy was obviously going to be the person least intimidated going into a mythology. So we ran with that. We combined by love for fantasy and his love for sci-fi and got here.

How did it work when he was writing the script? Would he send a draft to you and you would make notes and send back to him?

Yeah, it was very collaborative. We were coming back and saying, "Now we've got an opportunity to make something special, let's live, sleep, eat this."

When you mapped it out did you map out anything further than what we'll see in RIDDICK?

Yes. I'm not supposed to tell you that, but yes.

So is there definitely a third film in the works or will that depend on the success of this film?

Well it's a very, very, very big picture. Right now, all our efforts are into making THIS special before we indulge ourselves on the next two stories.

There are two after this one?

Yeah, initially it was designed or conceived as a story that would take three pictures to tell.

Was there ever any thought to filming more than one of them at a time?

No... I think we wanted to take advantage of being able to focus on one picture and once we come up for air, starting fresh with the second picture.

What was it about this mythology that drew you revisiting the same character as opposed to doing sequels for FAST AND THE FURIOUS or XXX?

I spent so many years playing "Dungeons & Dragons"...

You know, I had heard that, but wasn't sure if it was true.

Yeah, actually they've asked me to write the foreword for the 30th anniversary.

You're kidding (laughing)...

Nah, I'll send it to you when it's done (laughing). So... wait, what was the question again?

You were talking about how being into fantasy and D&D and how that influenced your decision to return to the character of Riddick.

Oh yeah. I was never... People think I'm shy to doing sequels. But the reality is, I just don't do sequels in a reactionary way. I don't do sequels because it's guaranteed to make a lot of money. I have to feel like we're continuing a story. I have to feel like we're continuing to unravel our character's identity and the identity of the universe. So the idea of creating a universe was what was the most exciting thing or the most attractive thing about this picture. We weren't just making PITCH BLACK 2, we were able to explore this universe that this interesting character had come from. PITCH BLACK is this contained film on a very confined story platform.

Was there every any concern from the studio that audiences might not put two and two together regarding the Riddick character and PITCH BLACK?

I think their take on it was, "We would make THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK on its own merit." The idea that there is a cult film introduction to the lead protagonist - our antihero - only made it all the better. Because the character was introduced in a very austere, cult classic way. You were able to discover the character and PITCH BLACK on its own. It really was everyone's own discovery as opposed to being a huge summer blockbuster. I think they kinda liked the idea of taking a character that was introduced in a very simple way and now building the mythology around that.

You're obviously a big fan of the fantasy genre and with your video game production company, Tigon Studios, you seem to be interested in a lot of the same things your fans are. Can you talk a little bit about how Tigon and your deal to develop the RIDDICK game came about?

I want to make good video game and it doesn't matter to me whether it's based off a movie. I want to make video games that are story driven, that are entertaining in its interactive ability. One of the games I'm making is a game called "Melkorsh" [only Vin knows how that's actually spelled...], which is like an adult LORD OF THE RINGS or an adult... ZELDA 64 (laughs). But the fun part of that is I'm able to - because cinematics has gotten so incredible - collapse a story in this video game so that this game is entertaining in its ability and its gameplay and simultaneously you could play the game with your girlfriend or significant other. Or a group of you could sit down and play the game and it'd be entertaining on the story level.

Right, even though you're not playing, you can sit and watch it and still have a good time.

Exactly. Right. The key to Tigon games is to entertain the person that's not playing.

Are you also into the web at all? If you're into video games and fantasy role-playing it seems like it'd almost be a given. Plus I see there are a lot of initiatives taken to develop RIDDICK online...

We've got a guy named Brian Murray who is... Have you seen our CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK website?

I have, I was actually just there a few hours ago.

It's pretty intense, huh?

It is.

We've got this guy Brian Murray who created the first PITCH BLACK website and he's one of the best at creating these sites. That's fun to be able to add dimensions by way of your website. To fill up the universe in the website, in the video game. I think that helps to make the film experience that much more entertaining. The cool thing about this film is that it satisfies on multiple levels. It satisfies you if you want to just go in - and this is actually something someone said after seeing the film that I thought was clever - for the popcorn movie. If you want to go deeper and want to really, really get into this movie, it's entertaining on a whole different level.

Yeah and I think what they did with the web was so important to the success of the first film.

Yeah.

I know David had also worked with us at JoBlo.com directly when BELOW was coming out and he was having so much trouble promoting that film. So he's always been a big champion to of using the web to supplement a film, not just promote it.

It's a whole mythology and when you're that ambitious to create a mythology from scratch, it's not like doing a book that's been around for fifty years or creating a character that's been in the comic world for a long time. It's completely original. And to do a completely original mythology that's set some time in the future, is all that much more ambitious and I think a testament to Universal. I think in an industry where the easiest thing to do is a sequel, the fact that Universal went off and did this and committed to this completely original mythology is a testament to their insight and faith.

As far as Universal goes though, were you at all disappointed with their decision to chase a PG-13 rating as opposed to the R that PITCH BLACK had?

I think that if you are - for the most part and I think that there are exceptions, like HANNIBAL would be rated-R and there's talk of C2 [the current nickname for RIDDICK 2] being rated-R because of the location... but that's all I can tell you (laughs). But with CHRONICLES, when you're using that many resources and you're making that big of a production, I don't know if it's fair to ask the studio to make it rated-R. Especially when you can add a rated-R version to either the DVD or whatever.

You mentioned both HANNIBAL and CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK 2, but what exactly is your next project going to be? You've got so many potential projects to choose from but nothing seems set as your next one.

That's a good question. Which ones do you have in front of you?

Let's see... I have THE PACIFIER, NY GIANT, HANNIBAL, FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3...

Damn!

...a movie called DREADNAUGHT...

Shit!

...I also have down a "Dungeons & Dragons" type fantasy movie...

"Melkorsh?"

...and then GUYS & DOLLS.

Man I'm busy. Wow. A little insane, don't you think?

Just a bit. Maybe you should cut it back a little.

What do you think should be next?

Not GUYS & DOLLS (laughs). I dunno... I live in Jersey and I'm a big Giants fan so I'd go with NY GIANT next. It seemed like it'd be something different too.

Yeah, a romantic comedy.

Then if you could do CHRONICLES 2 after that, it'd be good.

When are we ready for HANNIBAL?

You know, that's a good question. I dunno. Maybe right after CHRONICLES 2 you fit in HANNIBAL.

You're saying HANNIBAL after CHRONICLES 2? You wanna see CHRONICLES 2 first?

I think I would.

You didn't even see CHRONICLES 1 yet!

I didn't, you're right. But I'm excited to see CHRONICLES 1 and I couldn't wait that long for Part 2.

Yeah, I guess (laughs). You know, I've never had more people anticipate a film. EVER. It's just so wild, the energy. I've just been - and you know how long I've been yelling out the words CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK. Now it's alive! It's bizarre. It used to be a title I'd then have to explain in an interview. You know what I mean (laughs)? I get these e-mails saying, "How many more days? This is bullshit, I wanna see it now!"

Exactly. If I had to wait for CHRONICLES 2 as long as I did for CHRONICLES 1, I don't know what I'd do.

(Laughs) That's a good point.

The problem is HANNIBAL is going to take forever to make.

I know, I know! Especially because... I'm thinking of doing HANNIBAL as a multi-lingual film.

Really?

Yeah.

What would the other languages be?

Well the whole concept behind HANNIBAL is that he united a polygon army of broken people of oppressed cultures and unified them to defy tyranny. So there's something cool and contemporary about Hannibal's message. You know what I mean?

That'd be impressive if you could pull that off.

If I could pull that off man... I'd have to learn about five different languages. I'd have to learn a variation of French for the Gauls, I'd have to learn Carthaginian, I'd have to learn some variation of Latin to represent the dialect in Rome 200 years before Christ, I'd have to learn some variation of Spanish for Saguntum and Spain and for New Cartagena. I'd probably have to be compelled to learn some New Midian. Everyone spoke Greek at that time so you'd have to have some Greek.

Do you have a script yet?

Yes.

You have the script ready and now you're just waiting for the right time to film?

Yeah, by David Franzoni, who wrote GLADIATOR. And the conceptual artist I've been working with is a guy named Sylvain Despretz...

So does this mean Ridley Scott will direct?

Funny that you said Ridley Scott. First of all, I've never even talked to Ridley Scott about it. Ever. But it's funny that you say that. So you know he's Ridley Scott's conceptual artist.

Yeah and I think that's maybe where people picked his name up. They saw Franzoni and Despretz and thought Scott was attached...

That's how stuff like that happens. But it's very ambitious. I've often talked about doing a movie in a foreign country with a different language. And I guess it may be sooner than I thought.

Or you could come up with a whole language of your own for CHRONICLES 2.

Now that's good.

That'd really be ambitious.

That's a brilliant fucking idea.

Thanks.

That's good...

I tell you what, it's yours. You can have it to use.

Thank you!

Now in 20 years you'll go to RIDDICK conventions and all the people there will speak your language that you created.

Furyan (laughs)?

Yeah (laughs).

(Laughs) Too funny.

Anyway, so you really don't know what you're doing next?

I'm... I just don't know. I'll have to go around the world with CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK. And there're so many wonderful films to do. Spike Lee has been asking me to do Joe Louis. We've been talking about doing THE JOE LOUIS STORY, the Joe Lewis/Max Schmelling story. That's also kinda cool and current.

When do you get time to take a break and relax?

That's a good question. I think after this film and after CHRONICLES opens worldwide, I need to go on a writer's retreat. I don't even call it vacation!

Have you been doing any writing lately besides the foreword for the D&D book you're working on?

I'm doing a lot of writing on both "Melkorsh" [again, only Vin knows how this is spelled], which is a character that I actually played in "Dungeons & Dragons" when I was younger. That's gonna be that video game that'll have a strong storybase. And I've been writing and redefining HANNIBAL and tweaking that script.

Well Vin I just heard we went past our time but I want to thank you for taking the time and best of luck with RIDDICK.

Thank you brother.

Take care of yourself.

You too.

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RIDDICK RETURNS

GMR magazine

2004. June

Actor Vin Diesel heads into Pitch-Black territory with his first game. The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay

In the sci-fi flick Pitch Black, Vin Diesel made quite an impression on audiences as the antihero Riddick. It obviously made an impression on Vin himself, as he's now reprising the Riddick role in both a movie sequel – this summer's The Chronicles of Riddick—and in a videogame prequel, Xbox shooter The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay. The game is being copublished by Vin's own videogame company, Tigon Studios, along with Vivendi Universal. GMR had a chance to chat with the movie-star-cum-game-developer about his recent career change.

GMR: Besides providing Riddick's voice and likeness for Butcher Bay, how else have you been involved in the game's design?

Vin Diesel: Because it was important that the game ties in closely with Pitch Black, I was involved in all aspects of the story, from the direction and the writing of the dialogue to the character design.

GMR: How was doing Riddick's voice for this game different from when you did the voice of the robot in The Iron Giant?

VD: I had a different connection to the material. As one of the producers of the game, I was actively involved in the creation of the dialogue and developing the character.

GMR: Was it always your plan to start Tigon off with a game based on one of your movies?

VD: I had been formulating my plan to start Tigon Studios before I was ever approached by a game publisher. So when Escape From Butcher Bay went into development, it was an obvious step to be involved in it. Though Butcher actually started off as a Pitch Black game before the Chronicles of Riddick film went into production, which meant we were able to create a connection to the Riddick movie through cinematic design, a strong story, and character development.

GMR: What other games for Tigon have in the works?

VD: We're currently developing a series of titles, none of which are based on movies. One's called Perrone,

which is based on a true story about a cop in the South Bronx; the other is an epic fantasy game.

GMR: Has there been any talk of doing a game with you as the star, a la Jet Li's Rise to Honor?

VD: I have been approached with similar concepts, but it really boils down to what the game is, what the story is, and if it makes sense that I star in the game.

GMR: When it comes to games you play, are you more of a Mario or a Grand Theft Auto kind of guy?

VD: Grand Theft Auto, though I play lots of different types of games. I've always been an avid gamer, so if the game is great, I'll play it. My favorite genre is fighting, but I like everything from first-person shooters to extreme sports.

GMR: So what's more your style: gaming solo or in the company of friends?

VD: I like competitive multiplayer games. One of the greatest things about videogames is that you can play with your friends and your family. It's always exciting when you're competing against your friend... and you're winning.

GMR: As a videogame fan, what's been the most interesting thing about being involved in a game's design?

VD: The challenge of telling a story in an interactive medium. It's an incredible fun medium to play in because you don't have to tell a story in two hours. Designing a game also allows you to explore the outermost reaches of your imagination without the restriction that are placed on you in film due to costly budgets.

GMR: So what have you been playing lately?

VD: Of course, Butcher Bay. I have the latest build, and I'll tell you right now: It's insane! I'm also a huge fan of Soul Calibur II, Grand Theft Auto, and Medal of Honor: Rising Sun. But I'm an avid gamer, so if the game is great, I'll play it.

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Diesel Drawn Back to Riddick

[Sci Fi Wire](#)

2004.06.01.

Vin Diesel, who stars in the upcoming SF epic film *The Chronicles of Riddick*, told SCI FI Wire that he was drawn to reprise the character of the anithero first introduced in the sleeper hit movie *Pitch Black*. Riddick is **"a compelling character in both his complexity and his simplicity,"** Diesel said in an interview. **"His nature is complex. His character is complex, [as is] the unpredictability of his nature. But at the same time there's something very simple. And there's a very simple mantra that he preaches, which is: Don't f--k with me, I won't f--k with you. And ... those are interesting colors to play with in a character, because they're ... both two different extremes."**

Diesel said that Riddick differs in its mythology from other, similarly themed films, from *Star Wars* to *The Lord of the Rings*. **"Although we've had Star Wars and we've had Lord of the Rings and we've had these great mythologies, we haven't had a mythology that has a central character, a protagonist, that is as complex as Riddick, I don't think,"** he said. Riddick is a character who **"doesn't really know his history and is discovering that, and we discover it with him, and he's as shocked as we are,"** Diesel added.

In the movie, which takes place several years after the events in *Pitch Black*, Diesel plays Riddick as a fugitive who finds himself caught up in an intergalactic battle between good and evil. The filmmakers, including director David Twohy, **"were successful in making a film that satisfies on multiple levels,"** Diesel said. **"If you are going to the film to enjoy your Friday night, to go see an epic full-scale picture, ... [it's] rewarding on a very simple level. ... [But] if you are going to The Chronicles of Riddick to kind of be introduced to the mythology and to explore this universe, then it's also gratifying."** *The Chronicles of Riddick*, which also stars Judi Dench, Thandie Newton and Karl Urban, opens June 11.

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Exclusive Interview with Vin Diesel

[FILMFORCE.IGN.com](#)

2004.06.01.

Riddick himself checks in with IGN about the game and the movie.

June 01, 2004 - Vin Diesel's path through Hollywood is fairly well known. Young writer and director pieces together a film, gets noticed by a big name director (Steven Spielberg), and then goes on to star in two perfect zeitgeist action films: The Fast and the Furious and xXx. In the past couple of years, Diesel has kept a fairly low profile in the public eye considering all the ink he got in 2001-2002. Now, on the verge of the release dates of the fruits of his recent shadow labors (both The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay for Xbox and the cinematic explosion of The Chronicles of Riddick), Diesel is thinking not about box office and critics and game scores. He's thinking about ... Hannibal.

STEVEN HORN, IGN FILMFORCE: Vin?

VIN DIESEL: Hey Steven.

IGNFF: How are you doing?

DIESEL: Good. I'm just thinking up this one line here, can you help me with it? It's for Hannibal the Conqueror. It's a line that goes on a conceptual art poster. 'Uniting people with of no common language, culture, or religion, I have proven that the broken peoples of the world, united, can defy tyranny.'

IGNFF: That's a mouthful. How about just Hannibal kicks ass?

DIESEL: (laughs) What would you put?

IGNFF: I don't know. I don't really know that much more about it, other than what you said.

DIESEL: Well it's a line extracted from the script. Decent?

IGNFF: Yeah, for a poster?

DIESEL: No, I just have all these covers of conceptual art and stuff like that with lines that I extract from the script. ... Keep it? Uniting people of no common language, culture, or religion...

IGNFF: How about just uniting people ...

DIESEL: I have proven that the broken peoples of the word, united ... now should I throw in three dots after the word united? United ... Can Defy Tyranny.

IGNFF: That's better. That sounds good.

DIESEL: A little space there will do it. OK. Thank you, Steve.

IGNFF: It's interesting that you bring up Hannibal because the last time you and I spoke one on one was when The Fast and The Furious came out. You actually were talking to me back then about Chronicles. Is this pretty typical for you to be working this far ahead in the future?

DIESEL: Couldn't be more right. That's it. You got it in a nutshell. You're very perceptive to pick up on that.

IGNFF: I was thinking specifically about Riddick. Have you always thought of him as a multiple medium character? You've got the movie, the DVD, and now the game? Was this always the plan for Riddick? When did you foresee him seemingly becoming as big as he has?

DIESEL: Well, I always thought that, even while doing Pitch Black, I knew that I would be not really be attracted to the idea of doing Pitch Black 2 in the same way that I would be attracted to doing The Chronicles of Riddick, a film that would explore the universe that these characters on this very small and contained story platform are from. Exploring the mythology of that universe in the future...

IGNFF: It's interesting that you put it that way. You had a chance to come back and do xXx2 and again come back to your character from The Fast and the Furious for The Fast and the Furious 2 and yet this doesn't really feel like a sequel at all. It's got kind of a ... the scope looks massive! (Laughs)

DIESEL: Exactly! Judi Dench is the star. (Laughs) It's funny that you say I was talking that much about The Chronicles of Riddick, back in The Fast and the Furious days. That's years and years ago.

IGNFF: I think people are starting to get how big Riddick is, especially with the release of the game. I just came back from E3 and the hype around the game is incredible.

DIESEL: The game is cool. To answer your earlier question about did I envision this character as a multimedia enterprise or story... No, I just started the videogame company two years ago. I started it after I knew we were going forward on The Chronicles of Riddick. In large part, I started the company to make sure that the videogame didn't just have Pitch Black value, that it would have value on a story level, informational value, but in the universe for the The Chronicles of Riddick. In the videogame, we were able to incorporate cinematics that further explain the universe. Over the past couple of years, I have sort of discovered that value. For the film like The Chronicles of Riddick, where the appetite is insatiable for legend lore or facts

about the sci-fi or about this mythology, I kind of just realized the significance for a picture like this to have so many outlets.

IGNFF: Help us through the chronology, the game is before Pitch Black? Or is it nonlinear to the story?

DIESEL: It's nonlinear to Pitch Black, first and foremost. Cinematics that Tigon [Studios, Diesel's game production company] was able to incorporate into the game. With Starbreeze, we had the best developers on the planet. We had Starbreeze out of Sweden and Cos Lazouras, my game producer [at Tigon]. My Tigon office was in the same office as One Race [Diesel's film production company]. It was all Chronicles. People were unloading models of ships, there were cinematics playing, these gold masters all over the place. The information was very easily accessible because of that proximity and we were able to create a game that had Chronicles of Riddick relevance. There's parts of The Chronicles of Riddick that the studio hasn't even unleashed yet in the press campaign. There's so much there.

IGNFF: I can tell from the trailer, it's hot. There's a dense world. There's a lot going on.

DIESEL: The trick was to make sure there was a lot going on, to make it a dense world, to make it a complete universe, to round it out but at the same time not lose the opportunity to make this a central character-driven film. To that end, a character you want to root for and you want to get behind.

IGNFF: We know from the end of Pitch Black that Riddick is not necessarily an evil person. So is that question even going to be played with in Chronicles? Friends of mine, we kind of argued a lot whether or not, at the end of the movie, Fry got knifed by Riddick or if it was all the raptor. So there was some of the ambiguity there. So Chronicles will sort of have the "is he good or is he bad" stuff going on?

DIESEL: Chronicles will [explore that], just by nature of the fact he's a hunted man and he gets put in prison.

IGNFF: Nobody likes that.

DIESEL: Nobody likes that. So it's exciting, man...

IGNFF: With Riddick, we've talked about the time difference it's been since you've played this character. Can you think of things you've done between Pitch Black and Riddick that kind of helped your approach to Riddick, as far as your maturity as an actor and the way you approach character?

DIESEL: Hmm, that's a good question. I would imagine there are a million things that, just the experience alone, that would play a factor.

IGNFF: So Vin the actor obviously has more notches in your belt as far as...

DIESEL: I think, in the process and understanding [of] filmmaking, experience is the most valuable aspect of it all. But it's an interesting question. It would take me some time to really answer that accurately.

IGNFF: They only gave us 15 minutes! (Laughs) I also remember when we spoke, this was during A Man Apart, you were talking about Hannibal already. You had said something along the lines of when you're in a character, sometimes it takes you a little while to pop out of it – among your friends and family and that sort of thing. So what's it like being Riddick for so many years ... I've never had the experience, and I don't know that many people have, to completely immerse themselves in a character for so long.

DIESEL: Yeah, it's heavy. It can be scary at times. Riddick can be such a dark character, and he's so precise and absolute and he doesn't really waiver.

IGNFF: Have you found yourself becoming more like him?

DIESEL: No. It's an intense character to play. It's fun at times when Riddick decides to be a little bit more witty and less morose. But, he has many colors, which is another fascinating thing about playing him. But yeah, I mean, I'm still working on that. I had an interesting conversation with Sidney Lumet about that. And he was saying that I too will get to a place where I could play these characters and detach myself enough to leave it on set. At least, if not, carry whatever emotional tone the character demands with you all day.

IGNFF: I'm not even sure it's a bad thing. Has it struck you as being a bad thing, having all that baggage?

DIESEL: No, but it makes for lighter films, like the one I'm doing now, a lot more attractive. You know, I'm doing a film called The Pacifier now for Disney. Basically, I'm running a day care center.

IGNFF: There you go. Kindergarten Cop.

DIESEL: Well, this is more...when Disney and Spyglass were putting it together, they were really going for a

big School of Rock-esque type of film, with developed relationships between my character and all these kids. There was something to be a little bit more substantial. You'll see the film. It's very funny in some ways, because it's like xXx ends up ... the line on set is, 'xXx ends up directing a school performance of Sound of Music.' He goes in to save some lives of the family and ends up directing a stage performance of The Sound of Music. (Sings) 'You are 16 going on 17.' I mean, you're walking around set, humming these Sound of Music tunes, right? Or throwing a baby up in the air screaming, 'Whee!' It's a vacation.

IGNFF: Yeah, it's gotta be, huh?

DIESEL: That's a vacation from walking on a set and thinking how many people can you kill in one take.

IGNFF: (Laughs) Yes, it's a slight change-up.

DIESEL: Or being carted from one set to another in chains and shackles ...

IGNFF: Noisily clunking down the hall ...

DIESEL: It's a departure. But you need [it.] It's healthy as an actor to clean your palate. Go in a complete different direction, especially if you're planning on doing something like the Hannibal project – which really, really, really calls for this primitive rage. It's intense.

IGNFF: So what's going on with Hannibal, by the way?

DIESEL: It's all happening. [I've been] crazy crazy crazy. I've been thinking about possibly making it a multilingual film. I don't know what that would mean in terms of setting it up or whether or not that would have to go independent instead of studio. I just don't know. But my instincts are saying that it should be a multilingual film.

IGNFF: Well you seem to have pretty good ones. Do you want to talk about your physicality and how it helps you with your stunts and the action stuff? Riddick is moving all over the place.

DIESEL: He is. But with Riddick, I had to learn a fighting style called "kali." We had a combat coordinator named Brad Allen – really, really good – and he brought this knife style. Riddick needed to have this very Frazetta-like combat style: savage, barbaric, but precise and cat-like combat style. He is a master of blades, of blade fighting. So we got this style that starts at The Chronicles of Riddick.

IGNFF: Are there many people that still practice it?

DIESEL: Yeah, there are. When I was doing it in Vancouver for training, we trained for several months. But I also trained with Robert Rodriguez, Mark Kerr – Ultimate Fighting champions – to really develop this style, this fighting style. So it's very cool. That was very, very, very cool. That's kind of how you train, you know. I do very film-specific training regimens.

IGNFF: Is it in order to execute moves on camera or alter your physical appearance?

DIESEL: Execute moves on camera, to embody the character. I mean, when I did xXx, I went and I snowboarded. I went and I learned how to do jumps on a motocross. And I was shooting in Prague – there was no physicality...I couldn't sell the physicality with it. It was just an ability and an understanding what it would feel like to be an extreme athlete and go for that extra foot of vertical air. You had to really sell it.

IGNFF: So that's part of the fun of Riddick, learning that new style. What happens if you don't keep practicing things like that? Do you think you can hop back on a bike now?

DIESEL: Yeah, I can hop back on a bike. I think, you know, you warm up. Over a year ago, I started training riding elephants. I mean, that's like in the same way you remember me saying the words The Chronicles of Riddick before even the studio knew what the words were. That's how far you go back. I mean, that's kind of what I do. That's what I love. I love thinking about the film, the project and committing myself as much as possible.

Diesel's Stunts Fuel 'Riddick'

[ET](#)

2004. 06.01.

Far out! VIN DIESEL brings the good fight to outer space this summer with his most spectacular production yet, 'The Chronicles of Riddick.' Tonight on ET, we have an exclusive, behind-the-scenes look at the stunts in the epic flick!

"It's so much fun. I can't tell you how much fun it is," says Vin, who did most of his own amazing stunts for the new movie, opening June 11.

The sequel to the 2000 sci-fi favorite 'Pitch Black,' 'Chronicles' catches up five years later with Vin's

enigmatic anti-hero Riddick, a man with a price on his head who's dodging mercenaries across the galaxy. Captured and imprisoned on a planet where the extreme temperatures range from arctic nights to volcanic days, Riddick partners with a young woman from his past (newcomer ALEXA DAVALOS) to escape, only to find himself confronting the Necromongers, a crusading group of religious zealots led by the evil Lord Marshall (COLM FEORE from "Storm of the Century"), a tyrant bent on ruling the galaxy.

"We've created a fighting style that I think is sick," says Vin about the incredible battle sequences in the movie, adding, **"You want to make stunts seamless, so you can never I.D. the stunt guy. That calls for the actor doing stunts."**

Shot on a massive soundstage in Vancouver, the film employed more than 300 extras who were trained in formation, signals, tactics, posture and organization for the intense scenes. The big-budget production is Vin's first ready-made blockbuster since 'XXX' and marks the first time he's continued the story of a character he established from a previous film.

"What's so interesting about Riddick is that he is an anti-hero that has to struggle just to understand the purpose or relevance of heroism," Vin tells ET. **"So he travels through the universe, aloof to his heroic calling, and that's what this movie's about. It's about existing your whole life without any sense of identity and not knowing where you come from, and not knowing who you are, or why you exist. And that feels like a very relevant issue to build a mythology around."**

Also starring THANDIE NEWTON, KEITH DAVID and JUDI DENCH, 'The Chronicles of Riddick' hits theaters nationwide June 11.

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Diesel Fueled Riddick Game

2004.06.03

[Sci Fi Wire](#)

Vin Diesel, who reprises the role of antihero Richard Riddick in the upcoming film The Chronicles of Riddick, told SCI FI Wire that he was also intimately involved in the creation of a prequel video game, The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay. **"I created [game developer] Tigon Studios just because I wanted the Chronicles of Riddick video game to be incredible,"** Diesel said in an interview. Tigon worked closely with Diesel's film production company, One Race, to take elements from the upcoming movie and incorporate them into the Xbox title, he added. Vivendi Universal Games is distributing Escape From Butcher Bay; Universal Pictures will release the Riddick film.

Diesel also voices the character of Riddick in the game, which takes place before the events of Pitch Black, the 2000 SF movie that introduced the character and is the predecessor to The Chronicles of Riddick movie. **"I did the voice, I did dialogue writing, scene writing,"** he said. **"Some of the cinematics are completely original. We were able to assemble a great cast. Ron Perlman [Hellboy], Cole Hauser [who played Johns in Pitch Black] ... [are] amazing in it. ... Johns is in the video game, because it's a prequel to Pitch Black."**

Diesel added, **"I'm so excited about the game. The game has been rated and nominated for Best in Show at [the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles]. Real exciting. It's addictive, that game. I have it in my trailer, so everybody keeps coming in to play the game. Like they're always asking, 'Can we put up that Riddick game?'"** The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay has shipped to stores and carries a suggested retail price of \$49.99.

Vivendi Universal Games and Universal Pictures are owned by NBC Universal, which also owns SCIFI.COM.

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Vin Diesel The Dawn of a Dream

[El Nuevo Herald](#)

2004,06.03

translation thanks to Masha!

For the charismatic actor, his new film The Chronicles of Riddick, is the summit of an old dream.

Vin Diesel is mounted on a rocket toward superstardom, and nothing can stop him.

Now his name appears before the title of his films, like most recently *The Chronicles of Riddick*, a distinction that many aspire to, but few obtain.

"It is something that has taken a long time in coming," confesses Diesel in his deep voice during an interview in the Mandarin Oriental hotel in Brickell Key.

To the actor him it has not been easy to prevail. At the beginning of his career, he had to finance his own film *Multi-Facial* (1994), that he managed to have shown in the Festival of Cinema of Cannes in 1995, to demonstrate his potential as an actor that extends the stereotypes. Steven Spielberg saw the film and signed him for the role of one of the North American soldiers in *Saving Private Ryan* (1999), launching his career.

"It was very hard that I have had to exceed is the ambiguity of my multiculturalism." Said the actor. **"When I embraced that ambiguity, I surpassed it by making my films that explore precisely this fear."**

But the years of dancing in the streets, of not earning enough to be eligible for health benefits from the Screen Actors Guild, and the frustration of not finding roles that were worthwhile, have ended. Diesel has risen to the peak of his profession with his combination of "determination and strategy."

During the making of the highly anticipated *The Chronicles of Riddick*, an epic that mixes mythology with science fiction, he says he feels completely satisfied.

"It has been the realization of a real dream."

He explained to us that the ambitious project was born several years ago by way of a film with a modest budget, *Pitch Black* (2000), in which it introduced for the first time the character of Riddick, a special species of futuristic superhero. This time he has been able to incarnate it in a high budget superproduction with highly sophisticated special effects, under the direction of David Twohy.

He also emphasizes the importance of working with the likes of British Judi Dench, Zambian Thandie Newton, Canadian Colm Feore and New Zealander Karl Urban.

"I hope this film opens more opportunities to me, mainly the power to direct *Hannibal the Conqueror*," affirms Diesel.

The project about the ancient Carthaginian general starts filming in eight months.

Diesel was born July 18, 1967 in New York. He started acting as child in the New York City Theater in Greenwich Village. He received a masters in English from Hunter College (*he never graduated, dropped out of school long before that - Kriszta*), where he specialized in Creative Writing.

His filmography includes blockbusters like *The Fast and The Furious* (2001) and *xXx*(2002) and the less popular *Knockaround Guys* (2001) and *A Man Apart* (2003).

Single, he is not a man to divulge details about his personal life, but he told us that he won't marry until he's found his ideal woman.

"Of course I'm hoping for that woman who is my soul mate." He said.

However, during the filming of his action-comedy *The Pacifier*, that will be released in 2005, he experienced something that moved him.

"In this film, I worked with babies that my character has to take care of." Says Diesel. **"That's awakened my paternal instincts."**

Are you content?

The smile that crosses his face is like the Florida sun that he likes.

"I'm very happy." He assures. **"I've worked very hard, when I see the results, it's comforting."**

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Vin Diesel means business

[USA Weekend](#)

2004.06.06.

From cracking heads as a bouncer to saving the universe in the cineplex, this symbol of multiculturalism calls the shots. Got a problem with that?

By Jamie Malanowski

The world is full of people who spent chunks of their childhoods playing "Dungeons & Dragons", but hardly any played quite as cool a version as Vin Diesel did. The son of a theater director, Diesel grew up in a Manhattan housing development reserved for actors, dancers and others in the arts. **"The way we played was very theatrical,"** he says. **"When we had maps, the maps were pieces of art, and when the players had to do something, they performed it. I was Melkor."** Diesel jumps up and announces the name in a voice so deep it could jiggle bedrock. He grins ear to ear. **"When an arrow flew past your head in our game, it flew past your head!"**

An imagination trained on "D&D" is on full display next weekend in the sci-fi extravaganza "The Chronicles of Riddick." This sequel to 2000's "Pitch Black" makes a gigantic leap forward in both production values and vision. It's five years later, and merciless murderer Richard Riddick (Diesel) finds himself in a conflict where the future of the galaxy hangs in the balance. If there's any doubt about the class of Riddick's new neighborhood, note that the ethereal ambassador from the Elemental race is played by Judi Dench.

The story's expanded vision is mostly due to Diesel. There is no "Lord of the Rings"-type literature to base Riddick's adventures on, no "Spider-Man" series of comics -- just the actor working out a set of ideas with various screenwriters, most especially director David Twohy. Diesel, who is credited as a producer, continued his inspirational duties during filming.

Co-star Alexa Davalos says: *"Vin's a huge motivator. The actors would sit around the set, and Vin would tell us, 'This is what happened to your character,' and 'Your character belongs here in the scheme of things,' and he was so passionate it was contagious."*

Perhaps Diesel is so fascinated by mythology because his life is full of mythic moments. His first break came at age 7, when little Mark Vincent (his real name) and his playmates were making mischief in a theater they mistook for an abandoned space. The director caught them, and instead of shooing them off or calling the cops, she gave them lines to learn. Rewarded with applause and \$20, Diesel discovered a career.

Twenty years later, making little progress as an actor, Diesel -- he took the name from body-building slang that means "muscled" -- saved money he made as a nightclub bouncer and made a short called "Multi-Facial." The film is an acting tour de force: As an actor shuttling from audition to audition, the biracial Diesel convincingly portrays an Italian street tough, an angry Hispanic lover and a rapper before delivering a moving monologue about his desire to become "not a black actor, just an actor." The short was shown at Cannes in 1995 and soon got noticed by Steven Spielberg, who then wrote a plum role for Diesel in "Saving Private Ryan," which soon led to movies like "Iron Giant," "The Fast and the Furious" and "XXX."

"The money doesn't interest me," he says, not completely convincingly, about reports of commanding \$20 million a movie. **"First, you don't really get \$20 million. Second, it's like Biggie Smalls said: 'More money, more problems.'"** Diesel has a beleaguered look when he says this. **"What excites me is the chance to be productive. I worked hard for a long time to get to this place."**

Now Diesel is very much in a sweet spot. One film is opening; he's shooting another, is deep into planning a third and has pulled together a bunch of ideas for a fourth. He describes himself simply as **"a man who's caught the wave and is riding it for all it's worth."** Diesel so easily switches the discussion from project to project that he jokes he's diagnosed himself with ADD. He's just bursting to talk about the combat choreography in "Chronicles;" or the military innovations of Hannibal, the Carthaginian general he hopes to play next year; or the scene he's just shot in "The Pacifier," a 2005 comedy in which he directs a bunch of kids in a production of "The Sound of Music."

No sooner does he say that than he fills the cozy backroom in the tony Toronto restaurant where we're talking with the sounds of Rodgers and Hammerstein. **"Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens,"** he sings, a little crustily. But his voice is on key and not unpleasant, lending credibility to his next claim, that he's tried to woo Nicole Kidman to play opposite him in a remake of "Guys and Dolls."

He lights up a cigarette. **"I'm a social smoker,"** he says, **"and I hate it. I won't do it in front of kids."**

He says he's ready to settle down. **"I'm 36 and enjoying this phase of my life, but I want a family very much,"** Diesel says. **"The question is finding the right person, and so far I haven't."** He maintains he has little interest in pursuing the kind of splashy Hollywood life that would land him in the gossip columns. He says he's a reformed extrovert, content to haunt the periphery of the few parties he attends. His avocations remain working out and playing video games -- **"my drug of choice."** His company, Tigon Studios, is working with outside development teams to create new titles for major video game publishers.

Tigon's first release, "The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay" (Xbox), preceded the movie by two weeks. The game serves as a prequel to "Pitch Black," explaining how Riddick got to be the moody, misunderstood character we meet in the films. More and more, Diesel says, video games are essentially interactive movies. **"Seeing the 'Grand Theft Auto' commercial, which sells not the game-playing, but the characters and dialogue and ambience, I realized games seemed like a place where I could**

explore my imagination without limits."

The question about Diesel the actor is whether he will expand beyond popcorn pictures. Unlike many action stars, says Brian Koppelman, who co-directed him in "Knockaround Guys," *"Vin can really act. I hope he picks projects where he'll continue to grow and not just [be] a brand."*

Diesel acknowledges most of his hits have an action component but says blowing stuff up and pithy post-killing catchphrases aren't the hook when he chooses roles. **"Right now, for example, Spike Lee wants me to play Joe Louis,"** he says. **"A very physical character, obviously. But the boxing is the least of the reasons why I'd be interested in that part."**

When asked, point blank, if he is in fact a tough guy, Diesel pauses. He seems reluctant to have this become the dominant aspect of his persona. **"I guess,"** he answers. **"I used to be a bouncer. I'd get into fights every night."**

It would be interesting to see Diesel play Louis, a man who in the '40s was a symbol of his race. In recent years, Diesel has become something of a symbol of multiculturalism. In spite of his mixed-race background, he has adamantly refused to be pigeonholed; even his production company is called One Race Films.

"It's ironic," he says, **"that in refusing a label I've acquired the multicultural label. But I'm proud I've played a role in erasing these barriers."** Growing up, he had a lot of questions about his ethnic origins and what they made him. **"I'm hoping I can show kids where you came from isn't as important as what you can make of yourself."**

Although Diesel finds his work, in a word, "fun," there is a question of whether he will ever find that special someone he can spoil with affection and cook waffles for on the weekend. **"Will I ever? You tell me,"** he says, and smiles. **"Meanwhile, I'm having a blast."**

On-the-job training

Before Vin Diesel became famous, he had to struggle like everyone else. But even the most mundane jobs can help build the skills needed to become a movie star. A look at some of Diesel's past careers:

Bouncer

Why he did it: To make a little money while being part of New York's club scene.

Skills needed: Courage, alertness, ability to look cool with a clipboard.

How it helped: By turning away people night after night, he perfected an intimidating glare that would serve him well in hits like "XXX."

Telemarketer

Why he did it: To raise money for his self-produced early feature film, "Strays."

Skills needed: Confidence, persistence, a willingness to interrupt people at dinner.

How it helped: Being repeatedly hung up on helped build a thick skin needed to fend off critics and paparazzi.

Struggling screenwriter

Why he did it: To make his first short, "Multi-Facial."

Skills needed: Creativity, literacy, typing.

How it helped: By putting his career in his own hands, he created the part he was born to play: himself.

-- Bryan Tucker

CHRONIC MOVIE STAR: Vin Diesel champions 'The Chronicles of Riddick'

[EURWEB](#)

Kenya M. Yarbrough

Jun. 7, 2004

While Vin Diesel won't be returning in the next "XXX," the actor is returning as Riddick in the summer action flick "The Chronicles of Riddick." The film, about an escaped convict who can see in the dark and finds himself caught in the middle of a galactic war, is actually the sequel to the 2000 sci-fi thriller "Pitch Black" – although the two films are very remotely related.

In fact, one of the film's original titles included "Pitch Black 2," but the connection to the earlier film, considered an alien horror movie, with that of "The Chronicles," considered more of a heroic epic, led many, including the producers to disconnect the film from its lead in. Nevertheless, "The Chronicles" picks up five years after the end of "Pitch Black" in a battle over the future of all beings in the galaxy. Fans of the original will certainly return, as Diesel does, as well as those who may have missed "Pitch Black."

Diesel, whose Hollywood fame was launched from a role written specifically for him by Steven Spielberg in "Saving Private Ryan," said that quite early on in the development of the film, he was excited and passionate about the character and says that he exhausted himself into making it something special, and appreciates the reflection of his enthusiasm in the early stages of the film.

"I get lost in the creativity and the tunnel vision drive of willing the film. It charts my journey in making this film and it's important because it confirms a sort of passion ... and I'm a passion guy," he says.

Diesel approached the film with the same fervor he has for acting. He's been an actor since he was a tyke, but it didn't come to fruition, financially anyway, until he was 30 years old.

"I started acting when I was seven, and I didn't get health benefits until I was 30," he says. **"With SAG [Screen Actors Guild] you have to make \$7,000 acting a year. For the first month of shooting 'Private Ryan' I had health benefits only because I was hired by Interscope as a writer."**

Along the way, he confessed, there were a few naysayers, but Vin, whose real name is Mark Vincent, didn't pay them much mind, and chalks up his ambition to believing in himself.

"People never really told me I wouldn't make it, they said I'd never be a movie star," he said, although, as he explained, he grew up in an artist house where it was commonplace to have artistic ambitions. **"But if you have a dream,"** he continues, **"the first person that needs to believe in you is yourself. You have to believe in yourself. It's something when there is no other alternative. I think that it's driven by passion. If it's acting, when you decide to commit your whole life to it, if you don't go off to college and dedicate yourself to another career – I think it's a necessity."**

As he has dedicated himself to acting, he certainly dedicated himself to the film. Diesel is a producer on the project and played a major role in developing the storyline. The actor considered making the film both difficult and creatively fun.

"Part of the fun of playing Riddick in 'The Chronicles of Riddick' is that the audience is able to invest in the spiritual growth of Riddick. That's what was so fascinating about the character to me. Unlike the picture perfect hero, the whitewashed heroes, the idea that this anti-hero has to go through such a journey just to understand the concept of heroism before even the obstacles of being heroic was interesting. That's part of what has always drawn me to the character and made me want to expand on that and follow Riddick into this universe and unravel the mythology that surrounds it," he explains, however, he also considered doing the film a bit difficult.

"One of the challenging aspects about going from such a compact story like 'Pitch Black' to an epic film like 'The Chronicles of Riddick' was that there were no books that had been around for 50 years, there were no comic books that had been around for decades, so we had to find a way to introduce the mythology very quickly and in a way that you would accept without question," he says.

Diesel, a man of very few words, plays a character of very few words in the film. He says that that is because of two things. One is that the actor is more effective with physical acting and emotional portrayals of few words. The second is that, well, Riddick is right to the point.

"Riddick has an efficiency in his vernacular that speaks to who he is," he reveals. **"This is a character that is indifferent to the state of the world, and would like to be left alone. As an actor, I remember doing 'Knock Around Guys' and Brian Koppelman, one of the directors, said 'There are two things that an actor never says – 'you pay me too much' and 'you gave me too many lines, but you, Vin, are always give your to everybody else,' because I would always give my lines to other actors. Riddick is terse and pithy, but that's part of his character. You always have to get the sense that he'd rather not have a long conversation."**

Diesel says that he considers the character and film for all ages, but adds that Riddick is quite relatable to today's youth. He's overlooked and renounced, and doesn't see much value in valiance.

"In a time where Eminem is selling more albums than anybody else – that says something about our culture and our society not wanting to be righteous and or heroic and not wanting to be preached out. It goes further with all the Paris Hilton's and stuff ... we have to be very clever in how we introduce heroism. I guess that's a hat trick – to take a character that doesn't want to be a hero and then through his eyes watch him realize his significance in the world," he says.

There are a number of underlying themes and parallels to modern day society, including that to the plight of the youth, which Diesel says are quite deliberate. Another theme is the multicultural aspect of which the future is comprised of an array of ethnicities, cultures, and religions.

"The name of my production company is One Race," the biracial actor said, hinting upon his societal views and that of the images in the film. **"And the message is that we are all one race and the sooner we**

recognize this world as a global community, the better.”

While Diesel encourages us to make the world a better place, “The Chronicles of Riddick” opens nationwide this Friday, June 11.

Diesel Frets Over Riddick

[Sci Fi Wire](#)

2004.06.07.

Vin Diesel, who reprises his most famous character in the upcoming SF epic movie The Chronicles of Riddick, told SCI FI Wire that he's nervous about the movie's debut, but not because he worries about whether it will revive his career. **"Well, for some reason, I was more nervous last night [at the premiere] than I have ever been on any premiere,"** Diesel said in an interview a day after the film's gala June 3 world premiere. **"I was nervous, because it was something that I had been working on for five years that is so close [to me], [that has] been such a labor of love, and that made me anxious for some reason last night. I don't know why I'm more nervous at this than I've ever been."**

But Diesel repeated that he's not concerned about the film's effect on his career, which some observers have said has waned since his big success in films such as 2001's The Fast and the Furious and Riddick's predecessor movie, 2000's Pitch Black. **"Having said that, the second I finished my first day of shooting with [Riddick co-star] Judi Dench, I won,"** Diesel said. **"I had accomplished a real goal. ... The second the studio green-lit this epic that didn't spawn from a book that was in existence for 50 years [like The Lord of the Rings] [or] that didn't come from a comic-book character [like Spider-Man], [that] was completely an original project, I felt like I was satisfied."**

In an earlier interview, Diesel told SCI FI Wire that he wasn't worried about whether the movie would revive his career. **"No, [that's] not a concern,"** Diesel said. **"It's not about that. If that was a concern, I would have done all the sequels [such as 2 Fast, 2 Furious], and I wouldn't have kind of lost myself in the creativity and the fun of The Chronicles of Riddick. Films like The Chronicles of Riddick take a lot more time than a studio-manufactured sequel. ... The idea isn't about maintaining someone's idea of whatever. It's got to be about making stuff that you're proud of, and if that takes a little bit more time to do, then you've got to take that time out. ... The fun for me is making the movie. ... It's about the character."** The Chronicles of Riddick opens June 11. The movie is distributed by Universal Pictures, which is owned by NBC Universal, which also owns SCIFI.COM.

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Riddick is Back

Fred Topel,

actionadventure.about.com

Vin Diesel greeted press enthusiastically. It was eight o'clock at night, a long day of interviewing for us, but even longer for him doing press. But he shouted, **"Hey guys! How are you!"** before collapsing into the chair, admitting, **"Oh my God, I'm shot. I'm shot."** Discussing The Chronicles of Riddick seems long overdo for both Diesel and the press. He's been talking about this ever since Pitch Black began his rise to fame, and while The Fast and the Furious and XXX gave him blockbuster status. This project was always on his mind. Now it's here.

Why was it so important for you to get back to this character? 'Cause he's the coolest f*cking character I've ever come across.

What makes him so cool? He's an antihero. He's the quintessential antihero. We all know how much I love antiheroes. He's the quintessential antihero. It takes you 45 minutes in the movie just for Riddick to understand the word heroism. Let alone for anyone to hope that he can be heroic. That's cool. That's real. You can invest in this guy's spiritual growth. He's a guy that embraces that indifference and doesn't care what anybody thinks about it, who wants to be left alone. He's a guy that thinks that anything that happens with the universe has nothing to do with him and he doesn't care. That's kind of cool.

Do you relate to him? Somewhat. I relate to his defiance. Yeah, you know I had a problem with authority, it's no secret.

Having passed on XXX2, how much is at stake for this franchise to take off? I don't see it like that. This wasn't like creating a movie. This was like creating a universe. I've already won.

What is your Riddick workout? The Riddick workout started before I went up there. I was training with a UFC guy, Ultimate Fighting Championship fighter. I got up there two months early and started training in a fighting style called Kali which originated in Spain and then brought to the Philippines by Spanish traders. It's a fighting style that's just now beginning to catch wind. It's a fighting style that calls for ambidextrous two handed fighting. And that's what we studied. I went up two months early to learn this fighting style.

How do you feel about the ups and downs of fame you've experienced in the last few years? It's a double edged sword. The more successful your film is, the more famous you become. And we all think of fame as being oh, great, wonderful. The wonderful thing about fame is the bankability that comes with it and the ability to do things like The Chronicles of Riddick. And to tell somebody, "Hey, man, there's this cool idea, The Chronicles of Riddick that can incorporate all these fantasy elements and these sci-fi elements." The tricky part is that your private life is that much more threatened.

Do you feel any responsibility to young fans in the roles you pick? I think that I have to choose quality pieces and I think my responsibility is to dedicate myself wholeheartedly to these pictures, which is not a problem because I'm a workaholic. But to also, for me, I like to work on a picture over a long period of time and exhaust the possibilities.

When you look back at your first short, Multi-Facial, what do you see? Well, for anyone that were to ask me advice about it all or to comment on the journey, I started acting at seven years old. It took me 20 years to understand that if I was going to make my dreams a reality, I had to take the reign. I had to learn something about being productive and being self-sufficient, but I had to be productive at all costs and I had to make product. Because I was going around, telling everyone I was an actor and unless you were coming to a theatrical play I was in, you would never know. The short was an artistic expression that at that point after that long, I wanted to make movies. And that was the release of that desire, that drive. And something that people don't know is that I wrote Strays a year before I did Multi-Facial. But I couldn't get Strays made because it cost \$50,000 and I didn't have the money. So what successful people know and what I learned was if you can't do it all, do what you can. So I wrote a short film, a 20-minute short film. I wrote it in five days, and I used the means that I had accessible.

Why did you pass on XXX2? I never do sequels in a reactionary way. I don't mean that to be holier than thou. I had to do Chronicles of Riddick. I waited a year to do it. I didn't do anything for a year, just to make sure everything was right with The Chronicles of Riddick and just make sure that the cast was right. The script was right. The mythology was right. When I was done doing the first XXX, at the end of production, when I would brush my teeth at times, I would see these two blue eyes staring back at me in the mirror, which was an indication it was time to revisit The Chronicles of Riddick. I wanted to, again, I didn't have the rights to the wonderful Tolkein books. I didn't have the rights to comic book characters. I wanted to create a modern day futuristic mythology, so I dedicated everything to The Chronicles of Riddick.

Why not do XXX2 later? Good question. Because at the time, I had to continue with The Chronicles of Riddick, and I don't do films in a reactionary way.

Is it true you're considering The Fast and the Furious 3? I haven't seen a script.

Would you consider it? It would be unfair for me to say that I would rule something out without seeing the script.

Is The Pacifier the same project that was originally developed for Jackie Chan? No, The Pacifier is a comedy with kids.

That sounds like the same thing. How did they adapt it for you? They made my character direct a stage performance of Sound of Music, maybe because of my love of musicals. I don't know.

Will you do a musical? I would love to do Guys and Dolls.

Is Hannibal finally happening? Why are you saying is it finally happening? Have you heard me talk about that? I can tell you some production people that I'm working with. So, did you know that I was riding elephants?

Yeah. Did you know that David Franzoni wrote the script?

No. David Franzoni handed in an incredible script and you know what Franzoni has written, Gladiator and Amistad. Did you know that Sylvaine Dupris, who is Ridley Scott's storyboard artist and storyboarded Gladiator has been working with me for the last month? Did you know that I was planning to do a multi-lingual version of Hannibal the Conqueror?

Wow, which languages? Italian obviously, Roman for the Romans, an ancient version of French for the

Gauls, an old ancient Latin for Spain, for new Carthagina, a Carthaginian based language that I may use a Maltese language for. And all that in service of speaking to the fact that Hannibal, one of his greatest attributes was that he was able to amass an army of all these broken people to fight tyranny at the time.

That must make your Riddick preparation seem like child's play. Crazy, crazy, crazy.

How do you have time for a life? That's a good question.

You know, I've never seen you bring a guest to a premiere. Why do you prefer to do that alone?

Because, if it were up to me, no one would even see me before the movie. Because I want you to enjoy the experience and I want you to buy into the character as much as possible. I don't want to bring any of my personal stuff and crowd anyone's mind before they sit down and get into the experience. I feel like it would only cheat. I've tried to stay away from that.

What is this breakdancing video of you that's on the internet? You know, I was a street performer. I used to be a street performer in New York. I swear to you. When Flashdance was out, I was doing it in the streets.

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Vin Diesel

Paul Fisher

[Moviehole.com](#)

Mon, 7-Jun-2004

Vin Diesel arrives at the end of a long day of interviews looking as if he had been literally hit by a truck. Collapsing on the floor, he apologises in advance if he appears somewhat drunk. Whatever one's opinion of Diesel, and opinions certainly do vary, it is easy enough to be smitten by the man's ease of charm, and vibrant sense of humour.

Weaning a bold, shiny blue shirt with painted elephants emblazoned on it in all their glory and an elephant bracelet [the purpose of which becomes clarified as we speak], one is trying to ascertain what repetitive questions not to ask, given his look of anguish at the end of the day. **"At some press junkets, you get questions that you don't want to be asked, but for some reason, at this press junket, I have been asked wonderful, incredible, intelligent, insightful questions."** Perhaps that will change, we both agree laughingly, as we sit around about to begin to add insight into his latest film, "The Chronicles of Riddick".

Diesel is that rare breed of Hollywood star, one that tries not to take himself too seriously as a star, but as an actor, well that is a horse of an entirely different colour. This is a man who was brought up on a world of fantasy, and, like a grown-up child, sparkles at the very mention of one of his primary influences: Dungeons and Dragons. Or perhaps, one questions, it was just a rumour that Dungeons has spoken to the child within for some two decades. He rolls back on his chair and merely smiles. **"I never play D&D,"** he begins with mock seriousness. **"For some reason, they thought that I played D&D for 20 years. They thought that I spent years playing Barbarians, Witchhunters the Arcanum. They thought I still played D&D back in the '70s when it's just the basic D&D set. They thought I continued to play D&D when it became Advanced Dungeons and Dragons. They thought I played D&D when there were only three books - the Player's Handbook, and the DM's Guide. They thought I played D&D as it continued onto the Unearthed Arcanum, Oriental Adventures, Sea Adventures, and Wilderness Adventures. They thought I played D&D at the time when Deities and Demigods was the brand new book. They thought I played D&D when I used to get up to a place called The Complete Strategist in New York."** We get the point as he smilingly mouths: I'm into D&D a lot. **"It was a training ground for a lot of my adventures."**

These adventures initiated as childhood games, but have since morphed into the world of Riddick, about to unfold in a movie multiplex near you, or **"the concept of creating a world of neutrality."** Before Hollywood set about creating Vin Diesel and his unique persona, Diesel was on his way either Saving Private Ryan or entering the futuristic world of Pitch Black. Diesel knew, after playing Riddick in the latter, that he would eventually re-visit that character. Why? **"Cause he's the coolest fucking character I've ever come across,"** Diesel laughingly enthuses.

Cool, he says, because **"he's the quintessential antihero and we all know how much I love antiheroes. It takes you 45 minutes in the movie just for Riddick to understand the word 'heroism', let alone for anyone to hope that he can be heroic. That's cool and real, so you can invest in this guy's spiritual growth. He's a guy that embraces that indifference and doesn't care what anybody thinks about it, who wants to be left alone."** This is also a character with whom Diesel can identify. **"I relate to his defiance. You know it's no secret that I had a problem with authority."** The loner aspect of Riddick comes across in Diesel, rarely seen in public with a partner, for instance, arriving solo to the premieres of his films. **"If it were up to me, I wouldn't even go and no one would even see me before the movie,**

because I want you to enjoy the experience and for you to buy into the character as much as possible. I don't want to bring any of my personal stuff and crowd anyone's mind before they sit down and get into the experience. I feel like it would only cheat so I've tried to stay away from that."

Perhaps for that reason, Diesel has managed to deflect the public away from his personal life. It's all about the work and the actor remains a self-admitted workaholic. Yet, despite recent failures at the box office post-XXX, Diesel denies any pressure to turn the potential Riddick franchise into a major success. He produced the movie and fulfilled a personal ambition. Anything else is pure gravy. **"For some reason, I was more nervous last night [at the premiere] than I have ever been at any premiere, because it was something that I had been working on for five years that is so close, been such a labour of love and that made me anxious for some reason. Having said that, the second I finished my first day of shooting with Judi Dench, I won, because I had accomplished a real goal. The second the studio green lit this epic that didn't spawn from a book or hadn't been in existence for 50 years, or didn't come from a comic book character, I was satisfied."**

From the earliest moments I first met Diesel, back when he was shooting Pitch Black in Australia, there was always a sense of passionate ambition within him. He had written and directed his short film Multi Facial, which led him to Spielberg and Saving Private Ryan. Reflecting on his journey from Multi Facial to Riddick, Diesel is quietly reflective. **"I started acting at seven years old but it took me 20 years to understand that if I was going to make my dreams a reality. I had to take the reign and learn something about being productive and self-sufficient. I had to be productive at all costs and I HAD to make product, because I was going around, telling everyone I was an actor and unless you were coming to a theatrical play I was in, you would never know."**

He says "it's debatable" that the man sitting in this Beverly Hills hotel room is all that different to the man that made Multi Facial. Yet at the time of XXX, Hollywood was preparing to build Diesel and turn him into the next Hollywood superstar. One recalls throughout that press junket, how nervous and apprehensive Diesel was about impending fame. These days, he is more circumspect on that subject. **"It's a double edged sword, in that the more successful your film is, the more famous you become. We all think of fame as being great. The wonderful thing about it is the bankability that comes with it, the ability to do things like The Chronicles of Riddick and to tell somebody: 'Hey, man, there's this cool idea, that can incorporate all these fantasy and sci-fi elements' The tricky part is that your private life is that much more threatened."** So to deal with that threat, Diesel has always immersed himself into his work. **"Every time you've talked to me, I'm always talking about some project I want to do. You remember years ago when you sat down and talked to me, I was talking about The Chronicles of Riddick.? Before Universal knew The Chronicles of Riddick, you knew I was talking about it."**

Some may argue that he should not have passed on both The Fast and the Furious or XXX sequels, especially given the huge success of the former. **"I never do sequels in a reactionary way."** Yet he won't be drawn as to whether or not he can be persuaded to the third Fast and the Furious. **"I haven't seen a script, so it would be unfair for me to say that I would rule something out without seeing one,"** he says smilingly.

Diesel still yearns to star in a remake of the musical Guys and Dolls, and elephant bracelet that he is wearing relates, of course, to the actor's other pet project: Hannibal, which he has also been talking about in several press junkets. **"David Franzoni, who has written Gladiator and Amistad, has handed in an incredible script and Sylvaine Dupris, who is Ridley Scott's storyboard artist and storyboarded Gladiator, has been working with me for the last month."** And with the recent success of Passion of the Christ, Diesel hopes to shoot a "multi-lingual version of Hannibal the Conqueror."

When, one finally asks, does Diesel have time for a life. "That's a good question," he concludes smilingly.

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Vin Diesel on The Chronicles of Riddick!

[Coming Soon!](#)

Chuck the Movieguy
Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Growing up, Vin Diesel used to tell people that if he couldn't be an actor, he'd be a superhero. Now of course, he gets to do both, playing the tough anti-hero Riddick who's forced to save the human race in this week's The Chronicles of Riddick.

Diesel calls Riddick, a character first seen in the horror/sci-fi combo Pitch Black, **"a seemingly nefarious character who ends up being your only hope,"** and explains that's why he finds Riddick so fascinating to play. **"Unlike the picture perfect heroes and the whitewashed heroes, the idea that this anti-hero has**

to go through such a journey just to understand the concept of heroism before even being heroic was interesting."

The actor realizes that although The Chronicles of Riddick takes place in a futuristic world, the nihilistic anti-hero stance of Riddick fits right in with today's real life youth heroes like Eminem and the rap group G-Unit. He believes that young people don't want to be preached at about heroism or righteousness. **"We have to be very clever on how we introduce heroism to our culture, because it won't be accepted if we hit them over the head with it. I guess that's a hat trick, to take a character that's an antihero, that says, 'I want to be left alone,' and then through his eyes, watch him realize his significance in the world."**

Diesel is proud that the epic quality of The Chronicles of Riddick is so different from the compact story of Pitch Black. The challenge was to set up the complex situation of an entire universe without bogging down the story. **"There were no books that had been around for 50 years, there were no comic books that have been around for decades that have already introduced the mythology to the audience,"** explains Vin. **"This was completely original and because of it, we had to find a way to introduce the mythology very quickly and in a way that you would accept immediately without question, which was why it was so important to have Judi Dench play Aereon, because what actor comes with that much credibility in her tone? What actor has that authenticity? When she speaks of the universe and the state of the universe, you believe it."**

Diesel describes himself as a passionate guy who often gets lost in the creativity of making a movie. For The Chronicles of Riddick, he and David Twohy drew upon such influences as Shakespeare's plays, Kurosawa movies and the paintings of fantasy artist Frank Frazetta. In fact, the story of the Riddick character is so complex that a two-hour movie can't do it justice, so Diesel is using other media to further give fans a chance to visit Riddick's world. **"Because movies are so expensive to make now, the videogame world allows me to explore my imagination, put it all in there without costing hundreds of millions of dollars and when you're creating something like 'The Chronicles Of Riddick,' you're no longer creating a movie, you're creating a universe, so if you're wise, you'll take advantage of all the other markets to further flesh out that universe."**

Soon to be released are an animated DVD, The Chronicles of Riddick: Dark Fury, and a project especially close to Diesel's heart as a longtime gamer, the videogame, "The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay." Intrigued by the possibilities of interactive entertainment, the actor has even started his own videogame company, Tigon Studios. **"The videogames now are so much more story driven,"** Diesel explains. **"When I realized a couple years ago that people were buying videogames because of story more so than gameplay, that started to get really exciting and attractive for me." And what of the experience of controlling a videogame character that he has embodied on screen? "Two words: twilight zone. It's so bizarre playing yourself. You have to detach yourself, because nobody likes seeing themselves getting punched in the face repeatedly by these other characters. It's surreal but the game is so damn cool."**

While Diesel hopes to bring Riddick back to the screen in years to come, he has already started focusing on his next projects. He is shooting a comedy called The Pacifier that promises to show a softer side of Vin Diesel to the audience. In it, he plays a government agent who agrees to protect the children of an assassinated scientist, only to find that child care is his toughest mission yet. He is also determined to bring another epic to the screen, the story of the Carthaginian general Hannibal in Hannibal the Conqueror. **"It really needs to be told,"** says Diesel. **"The idea of the man unifying a polyglot army of all the broken people to defy tyranny, what's more current than that?"**

Of course, in typical Vin Diesel fashion, the actor started training to ride elephants for the role long before it was sure the movie would ever be made. But as a man who became a star after age 30, Diesel knows that fulfilling a dream can take years and years. **"If you have a dream, the first person that needs to believe in you and sometimes the only person that needs to believe in you is yourself."**

RIDDICK INTERVIEW: VIN DIESEL

CHUD.com

6.08.04

By Fred Topel

Can we say obsessive? Vin Diesel talks more about the desire to make The Chronicles of Riddick than he does about the actual making of the movie. Anyone who's been following the gravel-voiced baldy since Pitch Black made him a cult star and The Fast and the Furious made him famous knows that he buries himself in work. Or at least that's the image he puts forth in the press so he doesn't have to talk about who he's dating. So at the junket for Riddick, he informed press that he's been obsessed with returning to Riddick since before he was finished with other projects.

"I had to do Chronicles of Riddick," Diesel said. "I waited a year to do it. I didn't do anything for a year, just to make sure everything was right with The Chronicles of Riddick and just make sure that the cast was right. The script was right. The mythology was right. When I was done doing the XXX, at the end of production, when I would brush my teeth at times, I would see these two blue eyes staring back at me in the mirror, which was an indication it was time to revisit The Chronicles of Riddick. I didn't have the rights to the wonderful Tolkein books. I didn't have the rights to comic book characters. I wanted to create a modern day futuristic mythology, so I dedicated everything to The Chronicles of Riddick."

It's the eye thing that makes you start to wonder. He actually saw Riddick's eyes in his own reflection? But Diesel insists that he's just that dedicated to his craft. **"I've remained a workaholic. Every time you've talked to me, I'm always talking. There are probably very few people that you sit down and talk to and you always hear about a project. Everyone's always sitting down saying, 'This film was fun, blah blah blah.' You remember years ago when you sat down and talked to me, I was talking about The Chronicles of Riddick. Before Universal knew The Chronicles of Riddick, you knew I was talking about The Chronicles of Riddick."**

Well, he didn't have to slam other stars who talk about their work in a fluffier fashion. That's not very nice. But if you still think Diesel is putting you on, if you still think this badass tough guy must be spending more time in the gym than on preproduction, wait until you hear about his other obsession.

"I mean, I was literally playing Dungeons and Dragons with [costars] Judi Dench and Karl Urban at nights after shooting. I was showing her Dungeons and Dragons books and showing her the different properties of Elementals. Call me crazy."

The Elementals are a CGI enhanced breed, personified in the film by Dench, who can float around, appear and disappear. **"Where do you think Elementals come from? Of course the attributes have been augmented a little bit for Dame Judi Dench, but the concept of Elementals came from Dungeons and Dragons. The concept of creating a world of neutrality [also]."**

Attributes? He may as well have said hit points. This guy really knows his D&D, even when he acts sarcastic about it. **"For some reason, [people] thought that I played D&D for 20 years. They thought I still played D&D back in the '70s when it's just the basic D&D set. They thought I continued to play D&D when it became Advanced Dungeons and Dragons. They thought I played D&D when there was only three books – the Player's Handbook, the Monster Manual and the DM's Guide. They thought I played D&D as it continued onto the Unearthed Arcanum, Oriental Adventures, Sea Adventures, Wilderness Adventures. They thought I played D&D at the time when Deities and Demigods (Note from Nick: I was there too, Mr. Multifacial) was the brand new book. They thought I played D&D when I used to get up to a place called The Complete Strategist in New York. And then for some reason there was some sighting that I was at Wizards on the Coast buying \$800 worth of books. I'm into D&D a lot."**

Lest you think this was all self-indulgent babble, our man does have a point. Diesel comes from this fantasy world. He doesn't really know sci-fi all that well. That's director David Twohy's specialty. Thus, Diesel hopes to bring these sorts of fantasy elements into the sci-fi epic. **"I brought the fantasy element to the picture, he brought the sci-fi and it came together."**

Even though Riddick is an established character, and Diesel a box office megastar, the artist formerly known as XXX found himself nervous walking the red carpet at his own premiere. **"I was more nervous last night [at the premiere] than I have ever been on any premiere. I was nervous because it was something that I had been working on for five years that is so close, been such a labor of love and that made me anxious for some reason last night. I don't know why I'm more nervous at this than I've ever been. Having said that, the second I finished my first day of shooting with Judi Dench, I won. I had accomplished a real goal. The second I was able, the second the studio green lit this epic that didn't spawn from a book that was in existence for 50 years, that didn't come from a comic book character, was completely an original project, I felt like I was satisfied."**

If it were up to Diesel, the film would be a lot longer than the two hours it runs. Ever the fantasy aficionado, he thought of backstory that would have filled several movies. Fortunately, he had an outlet for some of that, the newly released video game The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay.

"I was able to add 25 minutes of story, so you see what he's been doing on the snow covered planet for five years. You witness the point in his life where his eyes are transformed and how that happens. Have you played it yet? They sold out in the first day. That's why I'm really freaking, because somebody wanted this."

True to his word, Diesel is always ready to talk about his slate of upcoming projects. First, on the rumor that he may come back for The Fast and the Furious 3, **"I haven't seen a script."** Note that he's not saying no. **"It would be unfair for me to say that I would rule something out without seeing the script."**

The big project is Hannibal, his long in the works biopic of the ancient Carthaginian leader. But he's going to do The Passion of the Christ one better. **"Did you know that I was planning to do a multi-lingual version of Hannibal the Conqueror? [In] Italian obviously, Roman for the Romans, an ancient version of French for the Gauls, an old ancient Latin for Spain, for new Carthagina, a Carthaginian based language that I may use a Maltese language for. And all that in service of speaking to the fact that Hannibal, one of his greatest attributes was that he was able to amass an army of all these broken people to fight tyranny at the time."**

And why did he turn down XXX2? **"Because at the time, I had to continue with The Chronicles of Riddick, and I don't do films in a reactionary way."**

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MTV VD interview

2004.06.08.

[MTV](#)

In "The Chronicles of Riddick," part one in a proposed trilogy that follows up the 2000 sci-fi thriller "Pitch Black," Vin Diesel plays Riddick, a 26th century convict who can see in the dark. Riddick gets caught up in a war waged by a sect called the Necromongers, who are bent on galactic conquest. In escaping from his subterranean prison cell, he winds up on a Necromonger spaceship, where he faces off against their leader, Lord Marshal. MTV News' Ryan J. Downey caught up with Diesel to talk about the actor's dedication to the Riddick character, the challenge of creating a new sci-fi universe, and the freedom of working from scratch.

MTV: While "Pitch Black" was really character-driven and viewers got to see Riddick go through an arc and figure out his moral compass, "Chronicles of Riddick" is on such a big scale, with its own mythology and huge set pieces, it almost seemed like it was going to be impossible for it to be anything like the first movie. But somehow it managed to stay true to the Riddick character.

Vin Diesel: Very true to the character. The objective was to stay true to the character, consistent with Riddick, and at the same time explore the universe and uncover parts of this universe that, you know, the sky is the limit on. [Director] David Twohy is a genius when it comes to sci-fi, and you can see it in the film. You can see it in the special effects. You can see it in every aspect of the visuals. I came in with [a love of] fantasy, you know, being the kid that played Dungeons & Dragons for so many years, and together we created this sci-fi fantasy with this incredible ensemble cast of actors.

MTV: Shakespearean actress Judi Dench lends a veteran presence to the movie, kind of like how Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart lent credibility to the X-Men films. When they come onscreen, you go, "Wait, I believe this now." It sort of elevates it above the level of popcorn movie.

Diesel: That's exactly what we needed. That's why it was so imperative that Judi Dench would play Aereon [an ethereal being who assists Riddick in uncovering his past], because we needed somebody that could explain, very quickly, the legitimacy of this universe, and no one could do that better than Dame Judi Dench.

MTV: It's pretty gutsy right now, in today's pop-culture climate, to put out something like this, because it's not based on a comic book, it's not based on a novel, it's not a remake of a TV show or something from the '70s. It's like "Star Wars" was in the sense that it's a brand new and fresh world. Isn't that scary at all?

Diesel: Well, you've voiced all of the fears and anxieties that we had going into creating this universe. But it was fun because of that. I mean, that's what was so attractive about doing this. We were actually attempting to create something that was fresh and new and without the support of a comic book and without the support of books that were around for 50 years. ... That was very liberating for us because we didn't have to hold fast to anything that was already created.

MTV: You could make your own rules.

Diesel: We could make our own rules. We could create literally our own universe. That's what was so fun about the whole process.

MTV: The universe is cool, but let's talk about the character. What is it about Riddick that makes you so personally invested in him? You really light up when you talk about him. There's definitely a unique investment with this guy.

Diesel: It started with "Pitch Black." It started when I got the script, when I read this character with such an incredible character arc, when I was introduced to this character that was misrepresented and described by all of the surrounding characters as evil without any real proof of it. It's the ultimate underdog story. I enjoyed the idea of playing a character that is imperfect. He's not only an antihero, he's an imperfect antihero. Very

capable, very proficient in many ways, but he is an imperfect character. He's not promising to be righteous. He's not promising to be holier than thou. He's not a whitewashed hero. And I think that allows the viewer and the audience to invest themselves in his spiritual growth. ... You can't assume heroism is commonplace. It's a feat just to understand it, and we go through that process with Riddick.

MTV: And when you see something as extreme as the Necromongers, it brings out some of that growth.

Diesel: It brings out the growth and brings out the necessity for that change and that understanding — if nothing else, understanding his significance in that universe. At the core of it, it's a film about identity and understanding one's significance in the universe, in our world.

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Diesel takes on action, games--and romantic comedy

By Miki Turner
[Metromix.com](#)

NEW YORK -- As action heroes go, Vin Diesel is a little shorter than The Rock, slightly less buff than the young Stallone, not quite as menacing as Arnold or as arrogant as Willis. But the raspy-voiced, New York-born actor does have his own special appeal.

He's charismatic, seems to possess above-average intelligence, and, unlike his peers in this genre, Diesel, star and producer of "The Chronicles of Riddick," is actually a trained stage actor.

In the movie, opening Friday, Diesel reprises the title role he first played in the 2000 film "Pitch Black." In the sequel, set in the 26th Century, Riddick--an escaped convict with night vision--is caught in the middle of a galactic war.

RedEye caught up with the former bodyguard-turned leading man by phone in New York and later in Los Angeles where he was hawking his new film. Diesel talked about that role, his affinity for video games and his love of the craft.

You put so much of your heart and soul into your craft--you've been acting since you were 7. If you hadn't been successful as an actor, what would you be doing?

I would be a superhero, I think. At least that's what I used to tell people when I was a kid. "What do you want to be, Vin?" Actor. "What else?" Superhero. People never told me I wouldn't make it. They told me I'd never be a movie star. I grew up in an artist housing project where it was commonplace to be an actor. The norm was to be artistic whether you were into ballet, modern dance, poetry, jazz, or a painter or sculptor.

So, are you a movie star or an actor?

I'm an actor.

And now you're a video game icon too. How's that feel?

Well, I never felt like being part of a video game until I actually became it. With the development of the game (The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay was developed by Tigon Studios, which Diesel founded), and how much I got involved, it got to be kind of fun. I found myself in a medium where I was able to do all these things and explore all these uncharted areas in my imagination.

Were you a video game fan before?

Yeah, I like video games. I didn't play for a while. I started to play 10 years ago. I love video games. I think they're so credible now--they're so advanced. The video game market is emerging and acquiring some of the characteristics of film. And that's fun.

What's it like playing your character in the Riddick game?

Two words: Twilight Zone. It's so bizarre playing yourself. You have to detach yourself because no one likes seeing themselves getting punched in the face repeatedly! It's surreal, but the game is so damn cool.

What initially attracted you to Riddick?

The audience is able to invest in the spiritual growth of Riddick, and that's what was so fascinating about the character to me. Unlike the picture-perfect heroes and the white-washed heroes, the idea that this anti-hero has to go through such a journey just to understand the concept of heroism ... was interesting.

You're one of the few actors in this action-adventure genre who has really studied acting. Is it about the acting or the physicality?

Well, I think it's about the acting chops first. I would hope. Clint Eastwood, in his later years, still maintained a presence that was about the acting and not necessarily about the physicality. I think that's true of a lot of actors. So, I think that while the physique is appropriate in some roles, it has to begin and end with the acting and commitment to the character. You can always gain weight, and you can always lose weight. Or use some prosthetics.

Some would say that "The Fast and the Furious" was your breakout role, but you didn't want to do the sequel. There have been rumors that you have signed on to do "The Fast and the Furious 3"; is that true?

No, I didn't sign to do that. [An executive] at Universal is excited about doing a Dominic Torero story that sounds interesting. But, you know, I await the script.

Will we ever see you in a romantic comedy?

You will see me in a romantic comedy. I promise. The thing is, "The Chronicles of Riddick," doing a film that size, it's not like doing a movie and going there for two months and you've done your movie and it comes out in six months. It's like a three-year process. It's such a colossal production that it takes so much of your time. So it's really about freeing up some time to do the romantic comedies.

What validates the work for you?

I think I have to feel good about it first and foremost. Then I give it up to the audience. It's about trying to create magic.

Being Vin Diesel is more than muscles

By Miki Turner
Special to Page 3
espn.com
2004.06.10.

Vin Diesel talks a lot of ... stuff.

The New Jersey Nets had just lost Game 6 of the Eastern Conference finals to Detroit and I was trying to convince Diesel, the star of "The Chronicles of Riddick," that the three Ks -- Kidd, Kittles and K-Mart -- would emerge victorious in Game 7.

Whether or not I really believed that at the time is not the issue. All I know is, after I made that rather naive and erroneous prediction, Diesel went all native New Yorker on me during an exclusive telephone interview.

The Nets could've used Diesel's muscles against the Pistons. **"So, you really think the Nets can do it this year?"** Diesel asked.

"Yeah, I think so," I replied with conviction. *"I've been sticking with them for the past three years, and you know, they've got that three-time charm thing going for them."*

"Oh & so, we should start putting our money on the Nets?"

Now, why did he have to go there?

When I explained that betting a bunch of dead presidents on the two-time Eastern Conference champs wouldn't be prudent -- after all, they were more of a sentimental pick than the smart money team -- Diesel began the laughing and taunting.

"That's real," he said. **"It's a fun conversation, but don't put any cash on it! My, the weather is fair today isn't it?"**

All jokes aside, the smart money in Hollywood is on Diesel these days. He's not one of the \$20 million men like Cruise, Denzel, Hanks, and Will Smith, but it ain't exactly raining on Diesel's parade. He is getting paid. And plenty.

The 36-year-old former bouncer's asking price more than quadrupled after he helped transform "The Fast and the Furious" into a box office hit. As star and executive producer of "XXX," Diesel commanded, and received, even more money.

Not only his is bank account looking brighter -- he's reportedly now earning about \$13 million per film -- Diesel's acclaim is also on the rise. His co-stars are quick to mention his passion and dedication.

"He's very wonderful to work with," says his love interest in "Riddick," Alexa Davalos. "He's got a tremendous work ethic, and he's very generous with his time and talent. He's just as beautiful on the inside as he is on the outside. He has a real passion for life and his family. He's a really good guy."

And critics dig him because, unlike most of his beefy action-adventure counterparts, Diesel's talent goes beyond brawn. He's a stage-trained actor who has been honing his craft since he was 7-years-old. He's also a respected writer, producer and director.

So, even though Diesel can kick butt with the best of them, at the end of the day, **"It's important for me to be noticed as a good actor,"** he says.

"I think (the action-adventure genre) is about the acting chops first ... I would hope. Clint Eastwood, in his later years, still maintained a presence that was about the acting and not necessarily about the physicality. I think that's true of a lot of actors. While the physique is appropriate in some roles, it has to begin and end with the acting and commitment to the character."

While Diesel might be packing a codpiece in "Riddick," he still cuts a rather fetching figure in his portrayal of a classic anti-hero. The film, which opens June 11, is the sequel to "Pitch Black." In this one Riddick, the nefarious fugitive who just wants to be left alone, is summoned to save an evil world that he initially couldn't care less about.

"The audience is able to invest in the spiritual growth of Riddick, and that's what was so fascinating about the character to me," he reasons. **"Unlike the picture-perfect, white-washed heroes, the idea that this anti-hero has to go through such a journey just to understand the concept of heroism was interesting. That's part of what has always drawn me to the character and made me want to expand on that and follow Riddick into this universe."**

What you don't see is Vin Diesel's "Hugs For Free" T-shirt. Diesel's own world is slightly less complex and mysterious. The son of an acting teacher and psychologist/astrologer, Diesel, an affable, earthy and intellectually stimulating dude, grew up in an artist's housing project in Greenwich Village.

His actual ethnicity is rather ambiguous -- he's reportedly as blended as a Starbuck's frappuchino. He's got a pinch of Italian, a dash of Latino, a sprinkling of Caucasian, and a smidgen of African American blood flowing through his bulging veins.

Initially, Diesel kept mum about his real name (Mark Vincent), using "Vin Diesel" to perhaps pay homage to his back-up career goal: Had the acting thing not panned out, super hero was next on the list.

Ironically, the naysayers in Diesel's hood told him he'd never become a "movie star." That prophecy didn't deter him. Besides, he didn't want to be a movie star; he wanted to be an actor. As an actor, he did well for himself at the start of his career, getting roles in "Saving Private Ryan" and "The Boiler Room."

These days, however, Vin Diesel the actor is now Vin Diesel, the full-fledged movie star. He proved that last week by displaying a famous trait of a true, Hollywood star: severe lateness. Diesel was nearly 90 minutes late for our in-person interview.

When he finally arrived, he was so charming and giddy that it suddenly didn't matter that he had pretty much trashed my Friday night plans.

Disarm and charm ... another classic movie star ploy.

Diesel's pretty adept at the old "duck and dodge," too. When asked if the rumors about him reprising his role in "Fast and Furious 3" were true, he admitted there had been some talk about doing a Dominic Toretto story, but that he was "awaiting the script."

Oh, he's good, a real pro.

Also, a real movie star can quickly throw you off of your game by turning the tables on you. Before I knew it, Diesel was the one asking most of the questions.

Like I said before, he talks a lot if, uh, stuff. Some of the banter was rather perplexing, such as the comparison he was trying to make between Riddick and Paris Hilton. I suppose she's an anti-heroine in her own right.

Some of what he had to say was engaging, like when he talked about his childhood. But most of the conversation was laced with interesting tidbits about his career, including one upcoming project with a sports backdrop.

"There is a project I have called "New York Giant," he explained. **"It's a romantic comedy -- it's the football version of 'My Fair Lady.'**

Uh, what?

"It's a romantic comedy that takes place, obviously, in New York featuring a Giants' football player. That's (a project) that I'm thinking about."

Playing an athlete would be a first for Diesel, a former stickball legend who claims to be a decent basketball player with a deadly 20-footer.

"I'm not going to talk (expletive) about it, but ..."

Yeah, yeah, talk that mess at Rucker Park, Mr. Movie Star With the NBA Finals Courtside Seats (at Staples Center).

Mel Gibson goes against the grain. But it's only fitting he should be there, at Staples, chilling in a cushy seat that costs as much (if not more) as some kid's annual college tuition. Multi-millionaires should support the other members of their exclusive super stars' club. But according to Diesel, the big pay checks for actors and athletes are well deserved.

"When people talk about actors making too much money I say look at Mel Gibson." Diesel offers. "There's not a studio in the world that doesn't wish they'd just paid him \$20 million and called it a day! You follow me? It's all relative, believe me. As for athletes, if they're not worth it, they won't be getting the big money. No one is giving anything away for free."

So that must mean that the other Diesel, the one who plays for the Lakers, is worth it?

"Shaq brings it, right?"

I suppose he does. So, Lakers in five?

"Now that bet I might take."

Talk trash to me, baby.

[GO BACK TO PREVIOUS PAGE](#)

Vin - 'Today Show' transcript

txt + image thanks to Sprial!

[..Matt and Katie are outside...]

Matt>> ...worldly elements...a bad guy who is tuff to hate...and we will talk to him about all of that in a few minutes...

[...Then the meteorologist gives the weather forecast and they show Vin sitting down waiting to be interviewed...Vin looks up at the tv camera and waves...and smile...then they go to a commerical...]

Matt>> Actor Vin Diesel is the bad guy you root for...

[...they show a movie clip from ...]

He is best known for his need for speed in the turbo charged hit, "The Fast and the Furious",

[...they show a movie clip from 'The Fast and the Furious' ...]

and as a new breed of secret agent...infiltrating a spy ring in "Triple-X"...

[...they show a clip from 'Triple-X'...]

But, before all that he played Richard B. Riddick, a convict with hight vision in "Pitch Black",

[...they show a movie clip from 'Pitch Black'...]

and now Riddick is back on the big screen in the sequel from NBC Universal Pictures, "The Chronicles of Riddick".

[...they show a movie clip from 'The Chronicles of Riddick'...]

Matt>> Clearly a romantic comedy {...laughter in the background...Vin smiles and licks his lips...} Vin Diesel, good to see you, Good Morning.

Vin>> Good morning...

Matt>> So, this sequel is supposed to be a stand alone movie...right?...You don't have to have seen 'Pitch Black' to understand that or understand this movie. But, however, after having said that...take

me back to 'Pitch Black' for a second..."what was the basis for that movie?"

Vin>> 'Pitch Black' was a very compact story...that introduced us to this protagonist...this anti-hero RIDDICK...and it all took place on this planet...it was somewhere in the sci-fic horror-gener. What "The Chronicles of Riddick is...is a mythology that... in which we follow RIDDICK off that planet...into this universe and through his eyes...are introduced to this mythology...

Matt>> Let me read to you a little snippet of the way that the movie has been described to me...and

Vin>> Okay...

Matt>> And tell me if I'm just crazy or having trouble here...okay...

"Imam introduces RIDDICK to Aereon, one of the Elementals, a race who is trying to enlist RIDDICK to help in trying to fight the evil Necromongers, who have been conquerorng worlds across the universe. Riddick is a Furyan, the only race the Necromongers fear."

Vin>> Exactly.

[...laughter in the background and Vin gives matt the thumbs up for correctly reading/explaining the premises for 'The Chronicles of Riddick'...]

Matt>> So, now we understand what's happening...

Vin>> Exactly.

Matt>> Is it...is it hard to follow...do you think for the average movie goer...

Vin>> No, it isn't hard to follow.

Matt>> Is it comic-book almost...

Vin>> ah, it's not comic-book...it's mythology...it's a modern day mythology...it's an epic film...it's a film that isn't afraid to ah...to explore the universe.

Matt>> Tell me about RIDDICK...What kind of guy?

Vin>> RIDDICK is a guy who has been given-up on ruled-out, overlooked, misrepresented and he is that last defiant thread in this...in this universe that is called upon to restore the balance.

Matt>> I know that you are one of the producers of the movie...

Vin>> Uh-huh...

Matt>> and I also know as a younger man you were a huge fan of Dungeon & Dragons...

Vin>> That's right...

Matt>> So, is that the kind of look and feel you wanted for this...for this film?

Vin>> Well, Elementals...and anyone that played Dungeon...Dungeons & Dragons knows...that Elementals is from that world...and...so much so that, Judi Dench's attributes...are pulled somewhat from my years of playing Dungeons & Dragons...

Matt>> You bring up something and I have to say...I'm not sure I'd ever thought I used the names 'VIN DIESEL' and 'JUDI DENCH' in the same sentence and being in the same movie...You really wanted her in this movie...didn't you??

Vin>> I had to have her...

Matt>> Why?

Vin>> Well, I've been a fan of her for so long...and as an actor we want to work with actors that we admire and that we can learn from and aside from that...my mother is a huge fan...

Matt>> And she would have killed you if you didn't get her in the movie...

Vin>> Right, so I flew out of London and charmed her with flowers and said, "That no one could be cast in this movie until Judi Dench is Aereon."

Matt>> And she signed-on...

Vin>> Well, when you're doing it...when you're going from a small movie like 'Pitch Black'...to an epic like mythology, 'The Chronicles of Riddick'...you need a voice of integrity...that very quickly...introduces you to the mythology in a way that you understand and can buy into it.

Matt>> Let me play a clip for you...In this clip Dame Judi Dench, who plays one of the Elementals...

Vin>> Uh-huh...

Matt>> a race trying to enlist RIDDICK's help in trying to fight the evil Necromongers...

Vin>> Uh-huh...

Matt>> So, let's take a look...

{...They show another clip of Imam introducing RIDDICK to Aereon...

Aereon>> There are very few of us who have ever met a Necromonger and lived to speak of it. So, when I choose to speak of it you should choose to listen.

RIDDICK>> Necromonger...

Aereon>> It is the name that will convert or kill every last human life unless Furyans warriors are found...they were the one race that would not bow...they were the only race that the Necromongers still feared.

RIDDICK>> Maybe, you should pretend like you're talkin to someone who's been educated in the general penal system. Fact don't pretend.

{...then they show Vin/The Chronicles of Riddick...smiling...}

Matt>> I'm watching you on screen with Judi Dench and thinking it was only six years ago...that you were in Saving Private Ryan...

Vin>> That's right...

Matt>> and looks what happen to you...and it's your own movie you are producing...Dame Judi Dench...are you ...are you amazed by the level of success and the speed.

Vin>> ah...yeah...ah...and ...ah...I'm estatic about it...ah...the idea that you could work that hard and then pull off a film like the Chronicles of Riddick, which is a dream, it is a film I've been plugging away at for 5 years...ah...and it's an incredible feeling and a incredible sense of validation.

Matt>> Well, enjoy the ride.

Vin>> Thank You.

Matt>> It's always fun to watch you and it's always good to have you here.

Vin>> Okay, thank you

Matt>> Vin Diesel...

Vin>> it's always good to be back home...

Matt>> We like to here that...The Chronicles of Riddick hits theaters on Friday.

{...they mention the next person they are going to interview, but before the go to commerical you hear Matt thanking Vin...}

Matt>> Vin, well done & thank you.

Vin>> Thanks for having me...

Vin Diesel, driving on a tankful of cool

Susan Wloszcyna,
USA TODAY
2004.06.10.

Diesel gives good phone. First, there's that grumble in the jungle voice, a basso-profundo growl from the gut. Another thing: For a guy who looks as if he could crush any number of your body parts like a ripe casaba melon, the actor has a goofy sense of humor.

At first, Diesel stumbles through an answer when asked why he wanted to again play his anti-hero from 2000's Pitch Black, an escaped convict with a healthy disregard for all intergalactic authority, in The Chronicles of Riddick, opening today.

"This character is so content with being indifferent. This character is going through a whole act, a phase in his life. Just to understand heroism, the need for heroism is interesting ... "

Blah, blah, blah.

Then he gets rolling. **"Riddick is so misrepresented. He is always described in the first act as evil by**

other people. In Pitch Black, we never heard what he thought. He never defended himself." And he throws a curveball. "Like Joan Allen in The Contender."

You laugh and he giggles over the fact that he has compared his tough-as-cheap-meat killer to Allen's vice presidential candidate who refuses to refute allegations of sexual misconduct. **"I told another reporter he was like Bogart in Casablanca,"** he says, trying to make amends. No matter. That he watches feminist political potboilers is actually somewhat endearing.

Diesel, an overgrown 36-year-old kid so hooked on video games he owns his own company, probably wouldn't bother to deny the accusation that he is full of himself. Not when he makes such declarations as **"I'm the most ambitious person you ever met."**

But his enlarged ego is matched by ample reserves of warmth and charm. That side got early exposure with small roles in 2000's Boiler Room (about Wall Street hustlers) and 2001's The Fast and the Furious (about illegal street racers). But it went undercover in 2002's XXX, a misguided rave-age update on spy intrigue that was expected to give Diesel's career a high-octane boost. Instead, it turned him into a poster child for hype overdrive.

So it's brutish Riddick to the rescue as the actor tries to reinvent a cult success into a franchise-igniting blockbuster and restore his momentum. That is, if the estimated \$125 million sci-fi thriller does reasonably well at the box office this weekend.

Not that Diesel, who also is a producer on Riddick, worries about such matters. Or at least he says he doesn't. For him, it's about pleasing the public and striking a common chord.

"I felt a great sense of anxiety at the premiere because it was so close to home," he says of Riddick's unveiling last week in Los Angeles. **"It's been five years of dreaming. Because I just wanted people to understand, to like it, love it, enjoy it. What is different about this is that it is enough. That was the reward. I don't get caught up in the numbers thing. That makes it about something else, too corporate."**

Don't be too fooled by Diesel's nonchalance, though. David Twohy, Riddick's writer and director, says his star knows full well what is at stake. *"He's very hip to what his place is in the industry and what people think. He has his finger in the wind."* In an attempt to restore his cool factor, he says, *"he very wisely chose to do an anti-hero like Riddick over other opportunities. On one hand, it's calculated. But it's driven by heart as well."*

Diesel cares about maintaining the integrity of his work. Perhaps too much. *"He hasn't changed a lot,"* says Twohy, who also directed Diesel in Pitch Black. *"He was a handful back then, and he's a handful now. He has a lot of ideas and that can frustrate a director. But there were some good ones in there. I've adapted to him and he sometimes with me."*

Meanwhile, the actor and Twohy already have plotted the next two Riddick chronicles just in case their dream of a trilogy gets the go-ahead. The actor also might re-explore his drag-racing Dominic Toretto from The Fast and the Furious. Not in a sequel, but in a movie spinoff, but only if the story captures Toretto's need **"to be competitive and victorious,"** Diesel says.

Striving for diversity in his projects, Diesel is in talks with Spike Lee to star in a bio of boxing champ Joe Louis that will focus on his fights with German Max Schmeling in the '30s and their effect on World War II. And he is now shooting an action comedy in Toronto titled The Pacifier. The premise: A disgraced Navy SEAL ends up protecting five youngsters whose assassinated father was a government scientist.

Consider it the once-declared next Schwarzenegger's Kindergarten Cop. **"The kids really shine,"** he says. **"In the third act, my character directs them in The Sound of Music."** And, yes, musicals are one of Diesel's favorite things.

Although Nicole Kidman turned him down to play his missionary love interest, he would still like to step into Marlon Brando's fancy shoes and tackle the role of dapper gambler Sky Masterson in a remake of 1955's Guys and Dolls.

So, can he sing?

After a momentary pause, he launches into a pleasantly gruff rendition of Jacques Brel's forlorn love song Ne Me Quitte Pas (Do Not Leave Me). In French, no less.

Oui, Monsieur Diesel might be tough, but he's tender, too.

Details of Diesel's once-mysterious past — he is half-black and half-Italian, his real name is Mark Vincent — are now out in the open. But what about his love life? Any plans to marry?

"I love women more than anything. When someone says I'm gay, these people don't have a damn clue. The only way anyone knows which girl I'm with is if a one-night stand goes on Howard Stern."

Maybe I took to heart what Tom Hanks once told me: that from 30 to 40 is when you create your career. I have four more years, then family."

Why did he turn down the chance to earn \$20 million plus profit points for each of two XXX sequels?

"The script wasn't right. They changed writers. It wasn't XXX to me. Two scripts were done, one by Rich Wilkes (who did the original XXX) and then another by someone else. I wanted the Wilkes one. That was the one I was excited about."

Diesel enjoys being the underdog. However, if The Chronicles of Riddick does well, he'll be a lucky dog. How will he maintain his outsider credentials?

"The only way to stay an underdog is to direct Hannibal (about the Carthaginian general who rode an elephant across the Alps) as a multilingual film. I've been wanting to do my own Braveheart. In the same way Mel Gibson needed to get enough bankability to greenlight a movie about a guy wearing a skirt, I need to amass my own bankability."

Is he anything like the defiant Riddick, whose silvery-blue eyes allow him to see in the dark when his foes can't?

"I think Riddick is a character who lives within me. I imagine there were traces of him after nine years of bouncing. When I was at the end of shooting XXX, I would look in the mirror and see two blue eyes looking back at me. A person in my position has to restrain himself. If Riddick ever comes out, I wouldn't care who you are. I would kill you in a minute."

For Diesel, 'Riddick' could spell redemption

Susan Wloszczyna,
[USA TODAY](#)
2004.06.10.

Vin Diesel revisits an old friend this weekend. An imaginary old friend. Richard B. Riddick, to be exact, a menacing outlaw who reluctantly saved the day and took his every scene hostage in 2000's sci-fi creep-out Pitch Black.

In a no-name cast, Diesel's lurking hulk, with his enhanced night vision and antisocial attitude, was a star by default. But the actor fully commands the screen in the sequel, The Chronicles of Riddick, an estimated \$125 million interplanetary spectacle opening today.

"People thought we were crazy to turn Riddick into a mythology," says Diesel, 36, of the initial reaction to plans for an eventual trilogy inspired by Pitch Black, which grossed only a cult-size \$39 million. It seemed even crazier after the actor, who is getting a reported \$12 million or so for The Chronicles of Riddick, rejected potentially richer paydays for surefire sequels to 2002's XXX (Ice Cube takes over) and 2001's The Fast and the Furious.

But Diesel, as usual, was confident. He says of David Twohy, writer and director of both Riddick films, **"He's the only guy I know with an ego the size of mine. We both wanted to pull this off."**

If they do, it will be in the nick of time for Diesel. Two summers ago, this chrome-domed overachiever with a Popeye physique was supposed to become the next action hero in XXX. And he would be the first to tell you so.

"I've always thought I was a celebrity," the ex-bouncer from New York boasted. **"It was the rest of the world that hadn't figured it out."**

Apparently they are still trying.

The hyped-to-the-hilt spy adventure with its ridiculous stunts (sky-surfing in a Corvette, anyone?) opened big at \$45 million, then quickly stalled at a good-not-great \$141 million. It felt as if Diesel was oversold as premium box office fuel when he was just plain regular.

"The backlash came before the lash in a way," says Adam Sternbergh of fametracker.com. *"He was famous before he had done anything to earn it."*

Diesel became a target, even inspiring a memorable zinger at the 2002 Oscars when host Steve Martin apologized to veteran actor Mickey Rooney for his crummy rafter-high seats with the excuse, "Vin Diesel is here."

Diesel still has his loyal supporters, however. *"Fans are very upset with the way Vin's being handled by the press,"* says Krisztina Csöbönyi, 25, of Gyor, Hungary, who oversees the Web site VinXperience II (vindiesel.hu). *"They think if he reprises Riddick, he will get the praise, credibility and box-office status that he failed to earn with XXX."*)

Observers agree that Riddick, with its intentionally toned-down marketing, could realign Diesel in the Hollywood galaxy. *"Expectations are lower,"* Sternbergh says, *"and if it is even a middling hit, he may get back to doing what he did in the first place — be an actor with a range of roles instead of a persona."*

Besides, anyone who can convince Dame Judi Dench to lend her cultured presence to an escapist action flick as Diesel did — after the sly devil filled her dressing room at a London theater with exotic fresh flowers — knows how to flex the right kind of muscle.

Her assessment of her co-star: *"Vin is a real professional and absolutely awesome. He knows the business so well."*

We will soon see about that.

TURBO-CHARGED DIESEL

Aug 21 2004

Paul English

DailyRecord.co.uk

MUSCLE-MANVIN DIESEL IS RAKING IN THE MILLIONS WITH HIS ALL-ACTION ROLES, BUT THERE'S MORE TO THIS AFFABLE HOLLYWOOD HULK THAN MAKING MONEY

'YOU'RE here from Glasgow?' Vin Diesel booms, seconds after we're introduced.

'Well, why didn't you say so? I love Scotland, man.' Hollywood's hottest hulking mass of muscles settles into an ornate chair amid the ridiculously plush surroundings of London's Dorchester hotel and immediately turns the tables.

Rather than grilling him about his forthcoming movie during a tight round of interviews, I'm the one answering the questions.

The 37-year-old, whose real name is Mark Vincent, wants to know my take on Glasgow versus Edinburgh, the city he visited amid a wave of hysteria at last year's glittering MTV awards.

Edinburgh's pretty, touristy and cosmopolitan, I tell him. Glasgow's gradually covering the scars of dying industry, pulling more tourists and emerging from the post-industrial gloom with a shine. He seems taken.

When talk turns to the past rumours of film studios pitching up in Glasgow, with supposed backing from the likes of Sean Connery, he sits forward in his throne, thick elbows resting on tree-trunk knees.

'Really? Now that is interesting...' he says.

When Diesel visited these shores for the MTV awards, he rode into town in a leather kilt, flashed a grin, presented a gong and rode out again on a wave of swoons. And the attention didn't go unnoticed.

'The girls in Scotland are just so hot,' he says. **'I don't know what it is, but there's something really, really cool about them.'**

Surely this man from New York, who spends his time in some of the most sophisticated places on the planet and counts Mariah Carey and Nicole Kidman as rumoured squeezes, is in full flatter mode?

A well-honed interview technique maybe? Butter the boy up, tell him his country is amazing and the women are mighty fine and that eats up the first 10 minutes. Very good.

But when this 16-stone superstar with the sandpapery voice, Play-doh face and chocolate button eyes really gets going, it becomes clear that his taste for Scotland extends beyond an ingratiation trick.

'Edinburgh was so much fun,' he says. **'The second I left, I spent many an hour on the internet looking for castles in Scotland for my mother.'**

Yes, castles. In the space of 10 years, Vin Diesel has gone from 'begging on the street' to earning a reported

\$11.9million for reprising his Pitch Black character, Richard Riddick, in its sequel, The Chronicles Of Riddick. Back then, legend has it, he bought a computer and rattled off a script for his first \$3000 movie, then took it back within the 30-day guaranteed return period to get a refund.

Such canny determination was garnered after his mother gave him a nuts-and-bolts guide to making movies - Feature Film Making At Used Car Prices.

The former nightclub bouncer then produced a film, Multi-Facial, which was shown at Cannes and drew the attention of one Steven Spielberg.

Four years later, he popped up in Saving Private Ryan. His career took off, with parts in action flicks The Fast And The Furious and xXx.

A decade later, he's producing and starring in blockbusters and, in typical Hollywood style, loved our country so much that, heck, he wanted to buy it. Well, a part of its history at least.

'My mother's from the Sinclairs of Scotland and she had so much fun returning to her roots when I was at the MTV awards,' he says.

'But I was a little discouraged from buying a castle after looking around for one on the internet.'

Why?Problems on rightmove.co.uk? **'Well, actually, people told me that it's not really as practical a venture as some people think.'**

Instead, he turned his attention to filming around our historical jewels.

'I had started developing a project called Richard The Vassal that I was going to do and not tell anyone I was in, so I went location scouting in Scotland and filmed around all these old abbeys,' he says.

From the sound of it, his favourite abbey was on Iona, but the details are sketchy and he can't remember exactly where it was. In any case, the project never came to pass.

We may have missed out on another wave of Braveheart-esque hype, but Vin's not exactly upset that it never came together. How could he be, earning what he does?

Actually, this multi-millionaire isn't that fussed about the number of digits in his bank account.

'I still think of myself as the poor kid from New York, no matter how much money I make on a film,' he says.

'We all like money and the comfort it brings, but I was raised in artists' housing, where the apartments were government subsidised.'

'It was a huge building of artists who all did art for the sake of art with no commercial element to it. If they made money, they couldn't live there, in fact. That's sort of stayed with me. It's never really been about the money for me.'

Singleton Vin has been categorised as the latest Arnie, Sly or Bruce Willis thanks to his action-man stunts and bulky frame.

But film buffs talk of his early indie flicks with admiration, claiming his acting skills make Schwarzenegger look like, well, Schwarzenegger, really.

This isn't surprising when you consider that he first broke into acting - literally - as a seven year old who stole his way into a New York theatre before being caught by a member of staff, who handed him a script and told him to go away and learn his lines.

He spent years honing his trade off-Broadway, baffling enough in itself, let alone when you consider that one of Mr Muscles' favourite productions was an adaptation of The Importance Of Being Earnest.

Could he ever turn his back on all-action blockbusters to go back to the live thrill of treading the boards?

'I would if I needed the immediate gratification,' he says. **'But I love the immortality of film. You're capturing a piece of time with film and I think what sets me apart from guys like Arnie and Bruce is that I started out as an indie film producer.'**

Having almost single-handedly wooed Dame Judi Dench to join the latest Riddick instalment, he reckons his acting and production ability will develop from working alongside her.

Priest star Linus Roache is another actor he admires, saying **'Linus is incredible. He's absolutely my favourite man to watch in the movie.'**

'No method is better than the experience of working with a great actor, so as an actor who wants to

grow, working with him and Dame Judi Dench is the way to go,' he says. 'I hunted and stalked Dame Judi. I saw her in a play with Maggie Smith in London and begged her to be part of The Chronicles of Riddick.

'On a personal level, I wanted to work with her so badly, but more importantly, selfish reasons aside, I needed an actor who could very quickly explain the parameters of the Universe in which the film is set. So who better than Judi Dench? When she says something, you believe her.'

And there's the difference between Vin and Sly. Judi Dench in the forthcoming Rocky VI, anyone?

The Manhattan man mountain turns away from the action genre to play what he calls 'a babysitter' in The Pacifier next year and he's in line to play Hannibal - the third-century BC general, not the flesh-eating psycho - next year.

But as our chat draws to an end, it strikes me that Diesel might be an interesting choice as Lex Luthor in the forthcoming Superman Returns project, being directed by X-Men man Bryan Singer and which is due to take off in 2006.

It strikes a chord with the shaven-headed one. A brawny arch-villain, moving away from the musty academic brain of Gene Hackman in the '70s and '80s.

'Wow,' he says. 'What would I do with this guy? Lex Luthor has an interesting character arc and if we could spin on the Superman concept and make something more interesting of this other dude, maybe a guy who used to be a street thug with a very keen mind, then he could be a cool motherf*** in his own right.'**

But could this fuel--injected anti-hero share the screen with the last son of Krypton?

'You know, if I ever got that part, then I'd rip it,' he shouts triumphantly, punching the air.

'In fact, if I ever played Lex Luthor, the film would be called Lex Luthor - Lex Luthor and this crazy-ass Superman.'

Keep the Kryptonite on ice for now, folks.

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Vin Diesel

August 22, 2004

[The Sunday Times](#)

You can picture Vin Diesel's agent at the negotiating table. *"We want 20 mill up front, points on the back end, a limo, a Learjet ... and Vin gets to wear a black vest throughout the entire picture."* *"But, please — this is a Restoration comedy."* *"Black vest — or else Vin walks."*

In recent years, Vin Diesel has come to enjoy a special relationship with his singlet. He sported one in the cult sci-fi thriller Pitch Black. He tore round LA in one in the exceedingly loud The Fast and the Furious. Dare we mention saving the world from biological warfare in yet another (or possibly the same) garment in XXX? In his new film, the bombastically titled space fantasy The Chronicles of Riddick, Mr Diesel has his outfit on again, delivering the universe without his label showing once. He's even wearing one today (technically a T-shirt, due to Dorchester hotel decorum, but doubtless the sleeves shred off with but a twitch of his monumental "delts").

Yep, that is Vin Diesel: not your mincing "unleaded" or your namby-pamby "four-star". Vin Diesel doesn't drive a 4WD on the school run; no, sir, he drives a goddamned Bradley Fighting Vehicle. Actually, in the absence of a Mrs Diesel, there are, as yet, no Deselettes. The actor's domestic attentions are currently lavished upon a suitably macho 15-stone mastiff named Roman. Unfortunately, Roman recently decided to clamp his jaws around the scrotum of the screenwriter Michael Kerner, resulting in a \$8m (L6.5m) lawsuit. **"Well, he was suing the insurance company — it isn't punitive,"** explains Diesel. **"This is the kind of dog you have to be introduced to, and he approached the dog and tried to submit it; tried to push his head down. The dog just snapped ... probably was painful."**

Vin Diesel demands ice, and a bucket of it is delivered. He asks for a cigarette and, just as surely, another minion is dispatched. His basso profundo may rival Isaac Hayes's, but there's also something quite playful — dare one say, a little bit camp — about him. A man enters bearing a silver cigarette case. "Can I bum a fag?" gurgles Diesel, employing an appalling Dick Van Dyke mockney accent. Considerate, too. Knowing I have

never seen his Cannes-wowing 1994 short, Multi-Facial (rather brilliant, it turns out), his calling card as the self-professed “first multicultural movie star”, he rustles round for a DVD. But first Diesel must thump the tub for his new film.

Riddick is a sequel to Pitch Black (2000). That low-budget, Alien-esque caper saw Diesel as one of a few crash survivors marooned on a planet of nocturnal carnivores (his character’s speciality being that he could see in the dark). Where the original was a model of economy, the second part has somehow ballooned into a space opera, in which the titular antihero hops around the galaxy fighting armies of necromongers and suchlike, the whole thing apparently set against the backdrop of a Yes album cover — Lord of the Rings to Pitch Black’s Hobbit, as he puts it. **“Chronicles of Riddick is the beginning of a tri-ogy. I wanted to follow Riddick off that planet. I wanted him to introduce us to a universe and a mythology,”** he gushes. **“The elements came from years of playing Dungeons & Dragons.”** With a tied-in video game, its appeal to teenage boys is assured. Diesel talks fondly of buying a trampoline to **“master the in-air anatomy of Riddick”** — which probably tells you all you need to know.

In the film, Diesel mumbles repeatedly about something that sounds like “Queen Victoria” (actually, it turns out, a planet called Crematoria). It had seemed the only way of explaining the presence in the film of Judi Dench. But not so. Diesel, quite improbably, had always had a yen to act with the grande dame.

“For years,” he enthuses. **“People would say to me, ‘Who do you want to work with?’, and expect me to say an A-list director or an A-list actor. And I would say, ‘Judi Dench’. She’s the best actor of our time. My mother’s a huge fan.”** Diesel went to London to see Dench in a play, then **“resorted to the old acts of chivalry”**, bombarding her with flowers till she cracked. **“When she got to Vancouver (to start shooting), she came in wearing a shirt that said DIESEL in great letters, which I thought was very cute,”** he chortles.

Diesel nowadays is in that rare group of actors who can command upward of \$20m per picture. Although, on hearing that his studio had consented to Diesel’s purse, one Columbia exec reportedly commented that he “figured somebody must be smoking crack”, the global success of The Fast and the Furious and XXX (his Bond for the extreme-sports generation) speak for themselves. Both were geared up for sequels. “I could have made \$100m,” Diesel declares. Realising, however, that with Riddick factored in, it would mean sustaining three franchises, he opted out of 2 Fast 2 Furious and XXX2, engendering no small amount of acrimony. However, he remembered Tom Hanks’s advice: “The hardest thing in the business is to learn how to say no.”

“I’m a poor kid from New York,” he says, **“so when somebody’s putting \$27.5m on the table for you to do a movie you know will be a hit, it can be challenging.”** Still, with another \$12.5m trousered for doing Riddick, he can probably still bathe in dollar bills. **“I wish,”** he replies. Well, his accountant can, then? **“Who knows what he’s doing?”** Though the rough upbringing is hammed up a little bit (his adoptive father was a theatre director), it is true that Diesel’s eventual arrival in the film world (he is now 37) was born of dogged perseverance. **“Al Pacino said, ‘Overnight success is 10 years in the making’. For me, it was more like 20.”**

To finance his first feature film, Strays (1997), he toiled in telemarketing, selling light bulbs. For nine years prior to that, he worked as a bouncer, where he assumed his hard-man handle (his given name is Mark Vincent). Daytimes were spent failing auditions, his “handicap”, as he addresses it, being that his mixed blood (part Italian-American, part African-American) did not allow him to fit into stereotypical parts. Thus was born the aforementioned Multi-Facial, which detailed his travails on the casting circuit. **“I’m multi-cultural, and I embrace my racial ambiguity,”** he declares. **“When I was growing up, there weren’t movie stars, icons like me, that I could look up to.”** Out of the blue, two years later, his agent received a call from Steven Spielberg, who was sufficiently moved by Multi-Facial to write a part in Saving Private Ryan especially for him (the soldier who tries to rescue a French girl from a bombed building). The rest is history.

Diesel has also toiled around in small straight films such as Knockaround Guys, A Man Apart and (more impressively) Boiler Room, even voicing The Iron Giant, but although he says, **“It prevents me from being the guy that has to do action films”**, the truth is that it has simply highlighted the success of his black-vest extravaganzas. Yet the term **“action hero”**, he says, means nothing. **“It goes in one ear and out the other.”**

He has, he points out, just finished The Pacifier, a Disney comedy. Then there is the possibility of a Guys & Dolls remake, and the prospect of playing the boxer Joe Louis in Spike Lee’s biopic. His big dream, though, is to realise the long-rumoured sword-and-sandals epic Hannibal. **“Either I’m ambitious or crazy, because I want to direct it,”** he muses. He is, too, about to shoot Find Me Guilty with Sidney Lumet, the master of the courtroom drama. With that, he stands up and raises his top.

A shockingly middle-aged belly flops over his belt. **“I’m supposed to be building a gut,”** he says. Maybe that’s why the black vest has figured so prominently ... and why he never takes the damned thing off.

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Vin Diesel interview

[Cinema.de](#)

Sept, 2004

Rico Pfirstinger/Johannes Bonke

translation thanks to 1sthammer!

Q: Mr. Diesel, short time ago you were a guest in Jay Lenos' "Tonight"-show. Does a cool action star like you know stage fright?

A: Usually I'll wake up every morning and frightfully count the days until my public appearance. But at the moment I don't have the time for being nervous. I shoot in Toronto and can mostly only sleep on the plane. Also as an actor you get used to that. I don't have to prove myself as a newcomer anymore.

Q: With the women, everything seems to run better than before. At Jay Lenos' you said girls are almost hunting you.

A: Oh yeah, that's true (laughs). But in fact I don't really like it. I miss being able to hunt the women undisturbed. In my former times a bouncer I was a regular woman hunter and had fun with that. I loved all woman as fitting for someone grown up in New York. And now, even though I want to stay the hunter, I've become the hunted. This goes extremely against my nature.

Q: Now c'mon, most men would love to change places with you!

A: That's not true, believe me. In my position you can't feel safe anymore. Visiting a movie undisturbed or eat in normal surroundings is almost impossible. I'm lucky to still have contact to my old friends and colleagues I fought side by side with.

Q: You love to talk about your former job a bouncer.

A: It was learning the hard way. In the beginning it was easy work. And then the streets turned dangerous. Colleagues were killed. I experienced a lot.

Q: What other jobs did you do until Hollywood made you rich?

A: I worked wherever possible. At sixteen I was street artist, later I drove trucks through New York. I even worked moving furniture.

Q: And now you're the iron action star swatting everyone...

A: ...and always under surveillance. My characters show it clearly: Don't start anything with me! But I never claimed to be better than others.

Q: Don't you feel comfortable with your image as action-icon?

A: Listen, I'm actor first. Seven years old I started it - the first action movie came 25 years later! I only got into "Pitch Black" 'cause my own movie "Strays" was shown at an independant movie-festival in Sundance. I'm an action star for only a few years now.

Q: Your young fans admire you mainly for your shown-off coolness.

A: Right. Faultless, spotless heroes don't interest the kids anymore. The old hero-concept is ripe for the garbage. You have to be able to follow the motivations of the protagonists. Especially in todays culture, where no one gives an excuse for anything. Someone like Paris Hilton would have been unthinkable ten years ago. It's fascinating where niveau drops to.

Q: How about your long planned "Hannibal" - adaptation? You've been working on this project for years now.

A: I'm as deep into that as never before. There's even a Hannibal tent in my garden where I retire to think. And since no studio wants to finance the project I develop the story with my own money.

Q: Don't you think the audience is fed up with these old time epics after "Gladiator", "Troy" and soon to come "Alexander"?

A: Most of these movies don't really get to the point of the old stories. Beginning with the language: Mel Gibson, in spite of all Cassandra cries, grabbed the tiger by it's tail and shot "The Passion" in aramaic and latin to give an impression of the atmosphere. Language is used as important stylistic means. "Hannibal" should become similar. Right now, we're working on a webpage with old maps to show the connections in the former Mediterranean basin.

Q: Your heaving this project on your own and even want to direct it?

A: Yes and that makes me underdog in Hollywood again. I want to shoot a absurdly expensive movie in old, long forgotten languages which are difficult to reconstruct. It plays during the punic wars nobody really knows anything about. Of course I'm very much on my own there. But I'm passionate in this. For really important projects you need stamina, even with "Riddick" it took full five years.

Q: The critiques for "Riddick" are scathing!

A: I don't give a shit. Some critiques are prejudiced and think of me as a big upstart who makes big money but never had to prove himself. They don't know my history. To make "Strays" I had to do telemarketing for a year, selling lightbulbs and screwdrivers on the phone. And anyway: do you know what counts a lot more for me than the critiques? The audience howling from enthusiasm. That's satisfying enough.

Q: Will there be more Riddick movies or do you have to wait for the money results?

A: One can do anything if you really want to. I'm always willing to do another part of Riddick but I don't want to rush anything. Riddick has been conceptualised from the beginning as epic trilogy to which "Pitch Black" should play the same part as "The Hobbit" to "The Lord of the Rings". Let's hope everything works out as planned.

New Vinterview from France

Maximal, 2004, September
translation thanks to Annabianca!

His name smells like and ecological catastrophe and his surname sounds like a sweet intoxication promise. But when Vin Diesel becomes Riddick, and interstellar con, it kicks galaxies ass.

Do you know that we love your surname in France ?

Really ! Why ?

Nothing. So, how does somebody become an action hero ?

First, you must be a fan of that style and have the breadth. I was a bouncer once. And for that job, I really needed to be tough. It helped me a lot, even if I knew I'd become an actor before understanding what muscles were for.

Well, they're a sort of added value for you ?

Let's be clear : I don't want to be categorized as an action movie actor. As far as I know, nobody ever said that to Kirk Douglas after he made "Spartacus", right ?

Sure, but there's no need to be irritated. After all, in COR, you're still very physical.

It's normal : I trained very hard with ultimate fighters for 2 months. They even taught me "kali" : it's an ancient Phillipinian martial art used by special forces.

In the movie, your look is strange, like you were having something in your eyes ? Painful ?

Of course ! It was horrible, a torture. Those contact lenses were like having saucers in my eyes. Truthfully, it was awful.

So, you're not as tough as we thought

...Could you repeat louder ...

Me ? I didn't say anything ! With XXX you gave a new breath to the action movie. What would make COR a success for you ?

But it's already a success for me. In this movie, I wanted to create a cross-over universe between D & D and science fiction. I think it's pretty well done.

Once again, your muscles do all the work !

Yes, but not only them... Riddick is the absolute anti-hero and I love it : it takes him almost 45 minutes to understand the meaning of the word "heroism".

And how mane to write it down ?

Wait, he's not a retard * laughs*. He's way more realistic than the kind of guy in movies that wakes up and says "What about saving the world today ..."

So, he's your double in a way ?

A little. We have the same kind of relation with authority. I really hate being given orders.

You're 100% in this movie. Is it because it is your baby in a way ?

Yes, but I'm a heroic fantasy kid, wile David Twohy is a science-fiction geek. My character is a mix of those two universes.

Do people could like such a guy ?

What a question. Of course : he's like me ! *laughs*

Seriously !

You know, when Eminem sells a lot of CDs and Paris Hilton is a star, you can believe that anti-heroes are a must. That's totally Riddick.

So, if I understand, you're pretty proud of the movie ?

If it were my decision, the movie would 4 hours long.

A little long, isn't it ? XXX made you a star. What would have you done if it wasn't the case ?

I'd have been a superhero *laughs*. Well, it's what I thought when I was a kid and reply when people asked me.

Generally, nobody would believe that I'd be an actor, so, to screw them, I'd tell I'd be a superhero.*laughs*

Did people really told you that you wouldn't make it ? That's not very cool...

They were imbeciles who didn't know me. I come from an artistic background where the norm is to become poet, actor, painter, jazzman or dancer.

Talking about that, I was told that you were a break dancer...

Oh, you're talking about that video ?

Yes. What is that fuss all about ?

Almost nothing. I was a street artist in NY. While everybody was in awe watching "Flashdance" I was dancing for pedestrians.

Cool, so you're able to do the 'caterpillar. Tell me : what all this mystery around Vin Diesel's private life ?

It's nobody's business. And I think that the public wouldn't believe in my characters if they knew too much about me.

So, nothing, not a little story ? What am I going to tell my boss ?

Jus tell him I say hello.

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I WOULD FIGHT FOR LOVE

Yam! (German Youth Magazine)
2004. Sept Issue
translation thanks to Annabianca!

Vin Diesel comes back on screen – this time in the dark Sci-fi movie « Riddick ». Yam (the magazine) met the XXX star in Berlin.

Between rats, needles, permanent stress and the quest for the right girl...

You're playing again Riddick, the action hero with a heart. Were you scared once in your life ?

By New York rats. Me and my siblings were told that we would need 15 injections in case of leptospirose, because the damned things were carrying all kind of diseases.

So you're afraid of needles ?

As a kid I hated rats, but once this fear disappeared, I discovered that I wouldn't stand than 15 injections in the belly.

I'm also scared of dentists.

Many fans were fascinated by your tattoos ? Do you have any actual ones ?

No, I don't want any ...

Because you're afraid of needles ?

(laughs) No. I'm an actor and I have to care of my appearance. If I had my arms tattooed, I would have to get up 1 hour earlier and have them hidden with make-up before getting on stage. So, I can stay later in bed.

Many fans missed you in "Fast & Furious 2". What did you lose ?

I chose "Riddick" because was involved in that project for 5 years, way before XXX. I refused the 27.5 mil \$ paycheck that I have been offered for 2F2F.

Is that wise ?

I know, but I wanted to make a movie in which I could unleash my passion. Moreover, I already had made TFATF. But a mystical space movie was new and I found it cool.

In our last interview, you told me that you were still trying to find the right woman for a long-term relationship. What's new ?

(laughs) I'm still looking for her.

Your girlfriend mustn't be happy to hear that...

Nice try (smiles). Actually, I'm single. I'm under permanent stress since my first movie, Multi-Facial, 8 years

ago. I don't take holidays.

Are you kidding ?

I'm a workaholic, but I had fun filming "The Pacifier" in which I take care of 5 kids. It has awakened fatherly feelings in me.

That must be the right moment to meet Miss Right. How do you show your love to a woman ?

I'd tell her, directly. I'm not the shy kind. Then, I'd spend a lot of time with her and fight hard for it to work.

And you would still hide your private life from the media...

I just want them to talk about my movies. If my fans knew all about me, they wouldn't believe in my characters .

It improves the movie experience...

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"Vin Diesel (Chronicles of Riddick)"

Marc Sessego

[Science Fiction Magazine](#)

Translation by Kriszta

Article tip thanks to Kali

It's June 11, 2004, in the "Four Seasons hotel" where Vin Diesel meets "Sf Mag". Vin is really passionate about the cinema and takes the time to speak to us about his life, projects and even of DVDs he likes. He is charming, very funny, and explains us why he is so passionate about the Riddick character... He is also a big traveler who will go and live in Rome.

I thus give you the pleasure of discovering why that cinematographic sentence "You are not afraid of the dark, are you?" became very famous.

VD: Hello, how you are? The film is already out in the cinemas..... Excuse me if I am somewhat distressed during this first day of its run.

Ms: No problem, mind if I jump straight into the middle? What do you think of the SF presented in the movie?

VD: Interesting question, because the film itself has its very own question. What would you do if they forced you to convert into one specific religion?

Ms: That's something others have often met in the history....

VD: Yes completely, you know a film adds the science fiction mythology...

Ms: What would you do, and... do you already know?

VD: Not! you know I come from Manhattan and there is no compulsory religion there, believe me!! (He laughs!!).

Ms: Why did you revisit the character of Riddick?

VD: The first film showed us this anti-hero, in a story that was between SF and horror, and if you watch carefully the first part, the person changes/progresses, and there is a certain affection the viewers feel towards his character: I don't know if it's a need, a desire or a desire to make it real (?)but this feeling was there, lurking... Moreover, "the chronicles of Riddick" allows us to meet again and arrive into a world that is 100% science fiction with all that that it means.

Ms: You are famous not to like sequels. Then, why is that?

VD: Everyone knows that I am somewhat reluctant when it comes to the sequels... When the first parts are excellent they immediately have the idea to continue them, to capitalize the success of the film! The amusing thing for me in "the Chronicles" that the character I play again was created in a movie that was not really successful, but I love him.

The most amusing things is that they identify me with all the characters I have ever played. It has to be said, that Riddick was accepted and loved by many people. When I was a kid I asked always what was well or good, and now, my mother finds that my films are all the explorations of morality! You know heroism is ever so present in our life.... I used to be a bouncer in a club in New York, where safety was our main because there were approximately 300 people per evening... and well, for some parts, I was happy to see them coming in excited, knowing that they were in good hands, especially the women if you see what I want

to say, and I can tell you that this club had become safer than the subway....

Ms: Your characters are always fighting or are interested in particularly physical actions. Will you be seen in more subtle roles?

VD: Right now I am shooting "The Pacifier" that is a comedy. My character is a soldier (navy seal) who at the same time have to look after kids: he must guard 5 children, from 9 months to 16 years... For me that's quite a turning point. Everybody knows that I would like to remake „Guys and Dolls" (musical from the '50), to pay homage to my grandmother who adored musicals,

Ms: are these projects already in development?

VD: Not yet, sometimes many years pass between the idea and the studio assignment. between it takes years from that takes sometimes years between the concept and the plate of the studio. If I think to "Pitch Black", for example, the studio was PolyGram.... I shot „Boiler Room" right after, and it finally ended up the way both movies were released on the same day!!! In fact, it had an excellent impact on my career because the public could see, on the same day, 2 faces of my play!! The action goes with the physique and the physique takes everything these days: I remember for example of my meeting with Joel Schumacher, it was about to play a transvestite and it did not work out:: a transvestite doesn't spend years in the gym! You see what I want to say...?

Ms: Who did you admire when you were child?

VD: The icons, you know the actions heroes are new in a certain manner. They come more from the duet of Stallone/Schwarzenegger than other things. But before them, there were Kirk Douglas, Marlon Brando, James Dean, who made his version of "The Fast and The Furious" with „la fury of vivre", Clint Eastwood, etc...

Ms: How did you prepare you and became Riddick?

VD: The physique of Riddick requires a body that allows him to fight fast. For the first film I did not go to the gym, I rather did yoga because my character, when the trouble start, quits the cryo chamber and this condition lasts for days and weeks: thus he cannot go to the gym. For criticisms, he was necessary to incorporate a style of combat that blends with the character. If you look at the video game: before his capture, in the beginning of film, he lived in captivity for 5 years on this planet and he could not do anything else but fight or ran away from these yetis. We have storyboards and drawings that we can show to you.... During these 5 years he developed a certain combat, which we took from the style of combat named „Kali". Its origin comes from Spain, and exists for several centuries, and it was brought to the Philippines where it is still alive. This is a combat style with 2 shivs. And do you know who did help me to synchronize the movement of the 2 knives? Jackie Chan's trainer: Brad Allen with whom I had trained for 2 months before the shooting started. If you look at the scene on the rocks where he saves Kyra, he is in a certain pose that is taken from the many drawings of Frank Frazetta. I have asked Brad Allen to elaborate Frazetta's images from Tarzan and Conan to other scenes where the bodies were in a movement.

Ms: Right now, are you satisfied with your career?

VD: Yes, very satisfied. I am able to do what I always wanted to do, the "Chronicles of Riddick" are a dream coming true.

Ms: Now, that do you shoot "The Pacifier", and you act with children, how is your relationship with them?

VD: We shoot for months, and I love the kids: this is one of the advantages of this film! And... it's amusing. In a scene I hold a 9 month old baby and I try to maintain a conversation with an other character, so the baby can not cry, but suddenly, he starts to cry, and I have to make some noises to calm him down, and return to the context of the scene.....

Ms: What does your twin do?

VD: He edits movie trailers, and he won a few rewards! He made, for example, the trailer of „Pulp Fiction".

Ms: Did you think about to going back to directing?

VD: I do not know yet; all I can tell you that the end of this year, I will go to Rome to set up my Production Company for „Hannibal, the Conqueror". So I will live in Italy for quite some time.

Ms: David Twohy said that for him the most difficult scene to shoot happened to be the final fight, is it also yours?

VD: Yes, because there were many challenges with the final one, both action- and story wise. We know that nobody expected that [ending], and they would criticize us for surprise people with the somehow „stupid ending". This movie was created as a trilogy, you can see that there are a lot of characters, and that's the fun of making a trilogy: you can develop your characters as you desire, and make sure that the viewer will be engaged into the history and participate. want them,

Ms: So you would love to do two more films?

VD: Yes, this is the way it is divided, "the Chronicles" is only the first chapter to the two other parts.

Ms: What are your favorite movies?

VD: „Braveheart“, „ The Lord of the Rings“, also from Ralph Bakshi (cartoon from 197 , „Gladiator“ I like it mostly for its visual quality,

Ms: One more please...

VD: Oh I don't know.....euh... the latest version of „Saving Private Ryan“....

Ms: It was announced that you would do the 3rd „Fast and Furious“. Is this true?

VD: Universal has contacted me, but I don't know yet. If it is done, it should be necessary to be better than the predecessors and much more in the sense of competition... There has to be a concept where my character goes from Mexico City to Japan to participate in a race and that's where - for me – it becomes very interesting.

Ms: (Showing Vin the cover „Pitch Black's" new DVD edition) This new edition is fantastic. Have you already watched it?

VD: Fantastic? Really? Why?

Ms: The transfer is new, there are new scenes, and the making of is really interesting.

VD: I have to buy it immediately!

Ms: (Showing Vin the cover of AMA DVD) What do you think?

VD: I love this film.....

Ms: This is not an easy film.....

VD: No, this not an easy film, this is a history of love and hate. This is a very bad period of my life and I was very depressed on and in this film, I was in a deep state of melancholy for months, I had dark thoughts because I had just lost someone very near... You will never guess... It took 2 years for the studio to release it. It was shot before „The Fast and the Furious“ (nope, AMA was shot straight after TFATF!! - Kriszta) and „XXX"! The studio made a huge error keep it in on its shelves for a long time, to the point till the „pirated" version was all over the place. Really, „Pitch Black" is one of 10 of the most pirated films all around the world, that tells you that tells you if you do not open your movie for 2 years after the shoot, the people will very easily obtain the copies for themselves...

MS: Have you already considered releasing a Riddick action figure, because I haven't found it yet...

VD: I think there is one in the makes: this is very fun for those who want to collect the memorabilia. You know your question is really funny because there is no more fun or cool than to create. I did play D&D for a very long time! I have started it when I was 12, and I still have yet to finish it, and I have even written a book.. but this is not as hyper serious as a real book that people read...

MS: Vin, thank you and good luck in Italy!

VD: (With a good accent and laughing) Prego ci vediamo (S'okay, thanks and laterz!)

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Kravall.de interview with Vin

[Kravall.de](#)

2004.08.03.

translation thanks to Janine!

Airport Berlin Tegel, 03.08.2004. Approx. 25 degrees in the shade, hairdo still proper. Yesterday Will Smith has been in town to promote his new movie 'I, Robot'. Today it's Vin Diesel for the premiere of 'Riddick'. Yes, that guy from 'TFATF' and 'xXx'. Well, he might not stand for profound movies but he knows very well how to entertain with action movies. Two months ago we almost got trampled to death for an autograph on the E3 in L.A. – now we're coolly sitting in the bullet-proof 'Bundeszimmer' of the luxury hotel Adlon with our colleague Daniel Rábiger of Treknews. What a twist of fate. At first we've been told that Mr. Diesel will be late. Now he's on time – Hollywood celebrities are as indecisive as our Krawall collaborators. With a loud 'Hello everybody!' he finally enters the room. He's surprisingly fit regarding that the day before he had given a private party at the Adlon after he had refused to go to the premiere of 'I, Robot'. Friendly he greets all those present. 'Twenty minutes', his assisstant reminds us. We divide our plan by three and start.

Krawall: Hey Vin. Got some welcome message?

Vin Diesel: Yeah...um...hello Germany. I am in Germany, right?

K: Yes. Have you been here before?

VD: That's my third visit. I've been to Hamburg and Berlin. I love Berlin, particularly after yesterday. In the US you can't go shopping that easily. I've been to the city yesterday – it's been so nice, you can learn about history and shop undisturbed. The people are cool - they just leave you alone. Maybe they don't recognize me or they don't believe that I'm really running about here. Spike Lee wants me to play the boxer Joe Louis. The script contains many scenes playing in Germany because of Max Schmeling. At present the script passes the usual licensing procedures at Hollywood.

K: Your career started with 'Saving Private Ryan'. What was it like to work with Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg?

VD: It was great. I'm originally coming from independent movies where you spend maximum 47.000 dollars for a project. Spielberg has budgets of 70 million – and nevertheless we have the same goal, that one magic. Tom Hanks was incredible, above all his suggestions about the industry. I've recently finished 'The Pacifier' – a Disneyish family comedy. That was frightening. And that was, what Tom told me at that time: pick the roles that frighten you.

K: Was it fun shooting 'The Pacifier'?

VD: Yes, that was the funniest time of my career. I had a lot to do with children.

K: You like children?

VD: Yeah, most of the time I held a nine months old baby in my arms. That was a wonderful experience.

K: What would you do if you weren't an actor?

VD: As a child I told my mother: if I'm not becoming an actor, I'll become a super hero. 'Stop dreaming' she would say. And then I started acting at age seven. I've practically been born into this multicultural artistic world. It took a lot of time. Al Pacino once said: An overnight success needs ten years of preparation. It took me 25 years. And I'm still counting...

K: Why didn't you act in "2F2F"?

VD: I've never made movies whose only right of existence is the commercial success of their predecessor. It's a problem if actors work without inspiration.

K: Money rules the world...

VD: Yes, people once thought I'd gone off my nut because I declined a millions' salary. You know, I've always been the poor boy from NY. I thought my dad would sermonize 'Don't let the dollar rule your life' – but instead he said 'Are you sure you don't wanna do this?' (laughs)

K: 'Riddick' the game to the movie is very successful. How did that project happen to start?

VD: It's the first videogame of my own gamestudio Tigon. The company profited very much from the fact that I produced the 'Riddick' movie. I could stretch the universe enormously with the game. It's more like a flashback than a playable 'Riddick' experience. You learn how he got those blue shimmering eyes and what he did during the last five years. To tell that in real sequences would cost 15 million dollars. In the US the game has been sold out shortly after its release.

K: No bad start...

VD: Yes, it proves that today's gamers want to see more of a story, movie inspired elements.

K: Do you play privately?

VD: I love videogames. That's why I established Tigon.

K: Other topic: Would you act in a TV-series? Like '24'?

VD: I have so many projects that need all my time. Like the upcoming 'Hannibal'. I rather spend my time on that.

K: Does 'xXx 2' come?

VD: Well, without me. How can I say - they have messed up the script. I couldn't do 'xXx 2' and 'Riddick' at the same time. And since I tended to do the latter, it's come like this. I don't know if they'll do anything with 'xXx' again.

K: Where do you see yourself in ten years?

VD: In ten years I'll hopefully have expanded my filmography and still be doing the same – best possible movies. Hopefully with a family.

K: Many children?

VD: Of course.

K: Thanks for the interview and have a relaxed premiere party.

VD: Thanks. See you.

Vin Diesel
'I like being underestimated'

Galore Magazine
2004.Nov.
Germany

translation thanks to Sebastian and JsVineyard

08/03/2004, Berlin. The interview suite of the Adlon hotel is crowded: a photographer plus his assistant, three press supervisors and a bodyguard swarm around Vin Diesel. However the actor is not only very friendly but also highly professional – he immediately concentrates on our interview.

Mr. Diesel, from your movies, you're known as a classical action hero but you refuse to accept this classification. You consider yourself to be an actor instead of a moviestar. What's the difference?

A moviestar is someone that only makes movies in order to get famous or rich. I have taken great pains in learning to act from the bottom up. A moviestar doesn't act, he more or less represents himself in his movies. People like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jean-Claude Van Damme or Sylvester Stallone, with whom I wrongly get compared all the time, need to literally have the scripts tailored to their personality because they just can't slip into any old character. Whereas a real actor merges with every role because he can adapt to it – not the other way round.

Based on the genre you're mostly in, many filmgoers obviously don't appreciate your skills as an actor and even doubt your intelligence. Does this fact disturb you in any way?

Quite the contrary. I like being underestimated. Because that gives me the chance to take the people by surprise. Back then, when I still worked as a bouncer in NY clubs, people used to treat me very arrogantly. They had no idea I spent my days with writing scripts and that one day, they would spend their dollars to see me on screen. At that time, I was sure to make it one day and so I endured their arrogance with a smile.

Concerning your starting into actor business, there is a rumour going round that you've been more or less forced into it?

That's right. I was seven years old and I grew up in NYC. One afternoon, my buddies and I got into that huge building to play there. And as it sometimes happens to rascals at our age, some windows broke and we got caught. We found out, that the building was an old theatre having regular evening performances. We were brought to the intendant who gave us a long lecture. But instead of calling the police or our parents, she handed each one of us a script and 20 bucks. For that we had to promise to return every day after school to take lessons. So I'm a professional actor since junior school. (laughs)

That fits perfectly – since your adoptive father was a stage director.

Yes, he was an English teacher and directed an amateur theatre group which I joined as a teenager. Thanks to the experience I could gain there, I took the leap to the smaller stages. He gave me the self-confidence to develop own script ideas.

What would you do if it hadn't worked out with acting?

I don't know. If you already have a Plan B in mind, you can't mean it serious with your ambitions. If I had failed with the breakthrough I'd probably still work on it.

You've written and directed your first two movies yourself. Did you ever have the feeling that you only succeeded because of your own initiative?

Right. In the movie business, you don't have success with the kind of amateur theatre background I have. You've got to have something to show, otherwise you don't even have the chance to go to an audition. I wanted to make movies at all costs and I had many ideas, but of course no money. So I worked as a telemarketer until I had enough money to realize one of my ideas as a short story.

Telemarketing is, by the way, an excellent form of acting school: you have to convince somebody completely with only your voice. Within the shortest time, I was one of the most successful employees ever and they were very sad when I quit. (laughs)

Then I had very good luck because Robert Redford saw my short movie MF and managed to provide me with sponsors, so I could make my first full-length movie Strays. Redford showed it at the legendary Sundance Festival; there Steven Spielberg became aware of me and offered me a part in SPR.

Your interest in writing and directing doesn't seem to have vanished since you made it as an actor.

No, not at all. At home I still have my script "Doorman" lying around, which is very autobiographical. It deals with a young New York doorman and I put several things in it that I had myself in this job. One day I'm going to film it. Should I be too old for it someone else will play the role and I will stand behind the camera. I will, however, direct a whole other kind of movie in the near future. The contract is already signed. - I will direct "Hannibal".

How do you relax between your projects?

I've tried a lot of things. My dad taught me how to play chess when I was a child. He was a passionate player

and by playing with him in the Washington Square Park, I could increase my pocket money. I'm still pretty good. I also enjoy snowboarding very much. But after all, nothing relaxes me as much as to indulge in my greatest love: making movies.

You've become very good in hiding your private life from the press...

(laughs) Well, this is partly due to the fact that for years, I haven't had the chance to develop anything like a private life. And on the other hand, I don't want to transfigure the illusion of my on-screen appearance with my private life. I don't want Vin Diesel to be loved or hated. The audience should project such feelings onto the character I play.

You didn't want to do sequels for your box-office hits TFATF and xXx. Why did you want to do a sequel for PB which is a rather obscure movie compared to the others?

Because I don't do sequels just because the preceding movie was successful. For me, a sequel has to fulfill the same conditions as a movie with an entirely new story. Doing a sequel without having new ideas for the story and the characters means to cheat on your audience. We had those ideas for TCoR, we developed the character and the feeling and put them on a new level. Plus I love the character. Of all the parts I have played so far, Riddick is the toughest, the coolest and the most fascinating one. He's the classical anti-hero.

"Chronicles Of Riddick" has earned not half as much money in the US as expected. Are you very disappointed?

No, because the movie is exactly what we wanted. The looks are overwhelming, the story is as up-to-date as very few others these days. It deals with a very military advanced nation which tries to enforce its belief and culture on other people. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

And you don't feel any pressure regarding the commercial success?

Believe it. The only pressure is that the success of a movie is deciding on if all the involved parties from director to script-girl and studio-carpenter will get other jobs. Of course it is important to a certain degree that all the investors are getting their money back because otherwise we look real stupid with our next project.

Even before completing "Chronicles Of Riddick" you announced two more movies of the saga. Is the plan, now that the desired box-office wasn't taken, shelved?

In the first instance, yes. That's the way it goes. Nevertheless director David Twohy and I won't definitely give up. I think we have a pretty good chance to go ahead in approximately five years.

Vin Diesel on Diaper Duty!

[ET Online](#)

September 15, 2004

Action star (and now Governor) ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER showed his softer side when he took on pint-sized stars in the action comedy 'Kindergarten Cop,' now VIN DIESEL follows suit when he tackles his first comedy as 'The Pacifier.'

On tonight's ET, our MARIA MENOUNOS is on the set of the upcoming laffer to check out just how Vin is handling diaper duty as he wrangles five kids in the upcoming feature.

"I think that working with the kids in this picture has been one of the most amazing experiences in my career," he tells Maria. **"Working with a nine-month-old co-star is so much fun. I can't believe it is even called work."**

In 'The Pacifier,' Vin plays disgraced Navy SEAL John Summit who takes on the job of protecting a government scientist's family after he failed to save their father's life. And, of course, he quickly learns that childcare is harder duty than any task he has been assigned as a SEAL.

The film also stars several familiar faces from the small screen, including "American Dreams" BRITTANY SNOW, the "Gilmore Girls" LAUREN GRAHAM, "Hope & Faith"'s FAITH FORD and "Everybody Loves Raymond"'s BRAD GARRETT.

"Brad is easy to work with," Vin says. **"Not in an acquiesce kind of way, but in a constantly entertaining the whole production kind of way. There are a couple of acts scheduled before lunch with Brad and we will all crack up. We were lucky in our casting."**

Directed by ADAM SHANKMAN, look for 'The Pacifier' in theaters in 2005.

So now that he is an expert at baby wrangling, what advice does Vin have when it comes to diaper duty?

"Don't use the bargain brands," he says with a laugh. **"Get something that works. That Velcro thing is pretty interesting."**

Vin Diesel: The Baby Whisperer of the 'Pacifier' Set

Feb 22, 2005

Mike Szymanski

Zap2it.com

Sure, he's known for fast driving ("The Fast and the Furious"), alien killing ("The Chronicles of Riddick"), extreme sports ("XXX") and even the voice of a gentle giant ("The Iron Giant"), but no one could predict he'd get along so well with babies like he did on the set of "The Pacifier."

"It was incredible watching him with the kids, he's always wanted a big family, and someday he'll make a great dad," predicts Adam Shankman, who directed the action star in perhaps his most sensitive role -- as a Naval SEAL assigned to protect five kids. *"Who would ever have thought he'd take so well to it?"*

"Why did they call me the Baby Whisperer?" Diesel laughs after Zap2it.com asks about his close connection with the kids in the cast. **"The secret was creating a real organic relationship with the babies from the beginning. That meant the day that I was at rehearsals, the first thing that I did I was strap on those babies and just walk around."**

Diesel says he went right from the family comedy film to a Mafia biopic "Find Me Guilty" where he plays a real-life mobster. He says he returned to his tough guy image because he wanted to work with classic "Dog Day Afternoon" director Sidney Lumet, but sometimes his newly-found sensitive side showed up.

"I was walking around with the baby so much that when I got to the Sidney Lumet picture, in between takes I'd be rocking back and forth," Diesel recalls. **"I'm standing there rocking back and forth and Sidney would say, 'Why are you rocking like that in between takes?' And it was because this weird habit that I developed while I was holding the nine month old and constantly keeping him smiling."**

Still single and 37 years old, Diesel admits the film makes him yearn for fatherhood. **"I loved the babies,"** he gushes. **"On weekends I would be thinking about going back to set on Monday just to see the baby. It's a weird sense, you're all of a sudden going, 'I've got to see my baby.' It had a dramatic affect on me."**

It wasn't unusual to catch the hulking 6-foot-1 bulky star in a corner talking to a tiny baby he could hold in one hand. **"You could walk by Vin Diesel and that nine month old costar having a conversation that you couldn't understand -- a lot of goo-ga-gas,"** confirms Diesel.

"He was so good with the kids on the set," says Brittany Snow, who plays the oldest daughter in "The Pacifier." *"He just knew exactly how to handle them. The baby would cry and Vin would hold him and do all these weird sounds and the baby would stop crying. It was really cute. Sometimes you would see him going around the set with a kid. We were like 'why isn't he in his trailer'? He was playing around with the kids the entire time."*

And Lauren Graham, who plays the school principal and a love interest, says, *"The kids came to him. You'd think that he's such an imposing figure, they'd be slightly afraid of him, but maybe because he's fun to climb on they really clung to him and hung out with him. He has an even-tempered, quiet sort of way."*

She adds, *"He was a good kisser. He has a beautiful mouth."*

For Diesel, the most unpleasant part of "Pacifier" was his duck co-star, who bit his ear and drew blood. **"The duck was supposedly a very gentle duck,"** Diesel remembers. **"Then we were in a scene, it was take four, we're going through our lines, I hear some splatter on the counter and [screams]. My first inclination was to be like, 'This m-----r!' But I'm in a Disney picture."**

His ear is OK, and his mother is happy that he's starring in a kinder, gentler film than what he's used to -- especially since he's hoping to star and direct in the elephant-riding conqueror "Hannibal" sometime soon.

"My mom points out that this was an arduous year that we've all gone through as a country, and she says, 'Make them laugh. You're so funny.' She said that in that way that mothers do," says Diesel. **"I think that the theme for 2005 is going to be loving each other."**

Also starring Faith Ford, Brad Garrett and Max Thieriot, "The Pacifier" opens in theaters nationwide on Friday, March 4.

The Pacifier: An Interview with Vin Diesel

Blackfilm.com

2005.02.22

Of the past five years, Vin Diesel has been known for hard-hitting action movies like "XXX" and "The Chronicles of Riddick". In 2005, however, Diesel plans to bring his audience to a new frontier: the family movie genre. In "The Pacifier", he plays Shane Wolfe, a Navy SEAL assigned to protect a witness' family- including five kids between the ages of nine months and seventeen years- from enemies who want to steal his secret invention. Diesel recently spoke to blackfilm.com about his departure from the genre he worked so hard to rule (if only temporarily), and explained how much of a thrill it was to trade barbs- rather than barbells- with a motley crew of children.

The film was originally conceived for Jackie Chan. How did it change to suit you, and how much remained the same?

Vin Diesel: When I first got the script, I wasn't aware of the people who were attached, or if there was anyone attached to it beforehand. I kind of bought into the whole script because it played on people's perceptions of some of the roles that I've played before, and found a way to fold that into the story line in an interesting and funny way. It's interesting that you pick up on the similarities with Jackie Chan, because my fight coordinator, my fight choreographer I used on "The Chronicles of Riddick", I brought in on this; these little comedic fight scenes were packed with real fight coordinator know-how, and my fight choreographer is from the Jackie Chan camp. So you'll see some similarities because he used to do fight coordinating for Jackie Chan.

What prompted you to move towards comedic material?

VD: This is the first time I had done a comedy, a real, out-and-out comedy. I try to make films like "XXX" funny, so that you're laughing in "XXX", but it's not sold as a comedy, which is a whole other thing. So I was a little anxious going into a new genre like that, but like I said before, the story was cleverly playing on people's perceptions from previous roles, and it was about kids. I had a cast of veteran comedians that protected me- you want an ensemble of guys that are going to make people laugh; then, they say you shouldn't work with kids or animals. Really, you shouldn't work with kids or animals if you've got an ego. If you don't, you move aside and let them shine, because the kids will shine every single time, so you have to do very little when you're in a cast; kids always have the most organic talent.

So you felt comfortable working with children?

VD: I felt more than comfortable working with kids. It was the first time that I had done a film where over the weekend I wanted to get back to work just to hold the seven month old babies. In order to pull something like this off, the bond that you have with a nine month old co-star has to be real, because they can pick up that the relationship isn't real and then you won't get a shot in there. That's where the saying comes in, that if you work with kids, you won't be able to get your production dates out. To prevent that, you've got to bond with the babies.

Are you concerned your core audience- mostly teenagers- will support a family-oriented picture like this one?

VD: Well, they should support it, and in droves (laughs). I think that there's a way that we do this that we include the action fans, because we're laughing at the genre together. It's like there's a way that you could have done it where you excluded the public from the joke; this film, because it's an Adam Shankman film, and he's so comedically brilliant, includes the public, includes the fans, the fourteen year olds, fifteen year olds. They get a kick out of seeing this character have to raise a family and have to deal with stuff that they are familiar with. In writing the script, I thought they were clever in creating a role that identifies each stage of growing up, and I think that's going to be the draw to teenagers.

How challenging was it to move from a strong-arm role to a more sensitive one in the course of the same film?

VD: That was the key- that character arc was the key- and the key was not to make it too obvious, and more importantly, to stay consistent in Shane Wolfe's disposition. Even though he's slowly starting to feel for the kids, he still had to keep a level of 'Navy SEAL' there present throughout the whole film.

How much of that was in the script, and how much was developed by you?

VD: You know what? That's a good question for any movie I do, and I never know what the answer is. Like I could say, 'you know, twenty or thirty percent,' but I think when we go into it, we take a collaborative approach to this and if it works, it works for all of us.

Did you identify with any of the children in particular?

VD: That's interesting. Probably the toddler. Probably the three year old, because I'm a twin, and we had twins on set, and I saw my twin brother in that.

Do you have a family yourself?

VD: I don't have a wife yet. I'm looking. Any ideas?

How much did you connect with your character's detachment from familial connections?

VD: Even inside a comedy, you have to make sure that their dreams are real, and I'm an artist, so who knows in the grand scheme of things why we gravitate to certain roles, or what that says about our own personal development. It's very fascinating, though- it's an interesting parallel- because I had been all about, as you know, as you've seen in the past ten years, all about moving in one direction and working as much as I can, grateful for the opportunity to make films, big budget films, small budget, everything. And it's interesting that this film stops for a second and says, 'the mission may be the family. The mission may be lying in suburbia.' There is an effect that nine month old babies have on you after a while when you come and set up every day and you come on set every day and they're the first thing you're looking for. Not the director, not the cast, not your work, nothing. The first thing you're looking for is that baby to smile at you. Or when you're in your trailer and you get a knock on your door and you think your scene is up and it's not; it's an A.D. saying, 'Vin, we need you on set- the baby's crying.' That's a good feeling. It definitely starts to kick the paternal instincts into high gear.

How tough was it to move from playing an ass-kicker to being the one whose ass is kicked, so to speak, by these kids?

VD: I think because it was kids it was so easy, because kids should kick my ass. That's what they're supposed to do. The kids made it very easy to do that. The secret for working with kids, for anyone who ever works with kids, is just get out of the way and make them feel as comfortable as possible. To me, it was all about us coming together and making the best movie we could make.

Did you accept this role to break that label you've worn as an 'action hero'?

VD: Well, you're not going to win a purple heart hiding in a foxhole. It's an old Navy SEAL saying we like to say back home. I did this role because it was an opportunity to work with kids, and I haven't been with kids, much less this many kids. It was an opportunity to do a Disney family comedy, and what that means for me is that I'm making a movie that the whole family can come and see. I have nieces and nephews who are saying, 'when are we going to see your movie, Uncle Vin?' They're six and eight, so this is the first movie since The Iron Giant that any kid can see, and I wasn't even in "Iron Giant", so they can't even tell their classmates that it's me. But the other very important thing to me was the idea of making a film that the whole family can come and see together. The reason is because when I was younger, the movies that stand out- even moreso than the movies, the experiences, the filmgoing experiences that stand out- are the ones that the family as a whole liked to do. Whatever movie we were experiencing, if I went to see a movie with my whole family, for some reason it was a much more impactful event and important. So this is the first movie that a whole family can see together, and that's kind of cool for a family outing experience as opposed to a "Chronicles of Riddick" 'go with your girlfriend' or 'go with your buddy' experience.

Are you worried that people might say you can't pull this off?

VD: I've never worried whether people said I can't act. Have you seen "Multi-facial"? Have you seen "A Man Apart"? "Boiler Room"? "Knockaround Guys"? I've been acting since I was seven years old. That feeling that other people have like, 'I'm worried that other people think I can't act,' that's not my thing. I've been an actor since I was seven years old; by profession, I started working in theater in New York City at seven. My father taught theater before I was born, so it's a craft that runs in the family. I didn't make health benefits until I was thirty years old, though- it was a very, very long journey. When I came out to LA when I was 23 years old, I came out here and I failed. I went back to New York a year and a half later, and I didn't even get an agent. I was worried then what people thought. I went back to New York and I started directing and writing because I really couldn't worry. I did a short film and I did a feature film and then Steven Spielberg wrote a role for me in "Saving Private Ryan". The first short film I ever directed went to Cannes in 1995. The feature film that I directed for \$47,000 was in dramatic competition at Sundance in 1997. If you don't see a picture of me at that time, I'm just an independent filmmaker, until you say, 'oh, this guy can do action films.' Then I did "Saving Private Ryan" and then I did "Pitch Black" and then the action films start. Doing something like "The Pacifier", doing something that is a comedy is really self-explanatory because it is a Disney family comedy- that's what it is. It's not a rated-R dark film where the characters are deep and brooding and introspective and dealing with existential issues. It's a funny film; it's a funny film with kids, and it was an easy shoot for me. It was just an enjoyable process because it was funny all of the time, as opposed to the roles that I play that are dark, and for me specifically, if I go into a role that's dark, I don't break out of that at the end of the day. I stay in that mode throughout the whole production, so if you look at three months of being melancholy or three months of being in a dark place, three months of a reality where your wife is dying and you're living

with that every day in the film experience, you compare that to three months of 'goo goo- gaa gaa,' it's a vacation.

What was your reaction to the finished film?

VD: (whispering) I haven't seen the movie yet.

Do you think you can win a new audience without losing your old one?

VD: Well, the idea was to do a family comedy, so that is a new audience, because they haven't been able to see any of my movies. The reality is you don't need to hire the babysitter because the babysitter is in the movie.

Interview: Vin Diesel "The Pacifier"

March 1st, 2005

Paul Fischer

[Dark Horizons](#)

Vin Diesel, wearing a t-shirt and jeans, is relieved that he can do more than beat the crap out of somebody. In his latest film, *The Pacifier*, Diesel gets to change diapers and deal with children, not to mention he has a love interest, no less. But the actor denies that this is the first time one of his characters has been funny. **"I feel that if you see any movie, XXX or Chronicles of Riddick, you see a funny side, so no matter how dark it is, there's a comedic element, and that's my nature."** But what he sees as unique in *Pacifier*, is **"I haven't done a film that a whole family could see, or one that my nieces and nephews who've been dealing with the reality that their Uncle Vin is a movie star can see, since Iron Giant, which was the last and only movie that I have ever done for kids."** *The Pacifier* tells of a Navy SEAL who, after failing to protect an important government scientist, learns the man's family is in danger. In an effort to redeem himself, he agrees to take care of the man's children only to discover that child care is his toughest mission yet.

Diesel admits that taking the plunge and doing a comedy, made him just a tad nervous. **"I tell you, that was a source of anxiety for me, initially, because it is an all-out comedy. When people say that comedies are hard to do, they don't mean the actual production of comedies is, but what's hard is to hit the mark once the film is made. Shooting that comedy isn't physically demanding, or isn't a complicated process while you're doing it. What's difficult about comedy is making sure that each of the jokes pay off."** Diesel says that what made this film work for him was **"that it already had this built-in element where it played on people's perceptions of previous characters I played, and that's what was fun about it."** Asked if he would do more comedies, Diesel pauses and laughs slightly. **"Yeah, I had a lot of fun doing this movie. I almost felt guilty about shooting this movie because I'm used to doing movies where, at the end of the day, I say, OK, see ya Vin. Bye guys, and I'm going home and I'm kind of thinking about the fact that my wife died, I've got to save this galaxy or I'm in prison and I've got to defend myself in court. This wasn't like that. I've been killing myself, putting myself on the line, then they give me movies with a lot of good comedy, such as scenes with babies."** The actor even concedes that working with kids in *The Pacifier* brought out his paternal side. **"Yeah, definitely, It pumps out that paternal side and I really want to be a dad after that experience,"** but would not be drawn on when.

But fatherhood and comedies will have to wait, as he announces that he will bring his dream project, Hannibal, to the screen, as both star and director. **"I'm going to direct it as a multilingual film,"** he admits, the decision having been made **"after I got a budget back from a studio that said it would cost \$217 million over the line. So I said, huh. I know I'm not the smartest guy in the world but \$217m, doesn't that mean that this film will never get made? There's no way in the world that this film will be made at \$217m, and I am already committed to this character, channelling this guy. So I'll go into soft pre-production, and think about sequences, and think about ways to shoot sequences that would have the same story about it but cost a lot less. So I went into soft pre-production and I got the budget down to \$50 million. I decided that I wanted to direct it. So you could take a scene that would cost \$20 million and if you are thoughtful and creative, you can cut down that scene, and have the same story about, the same emotional and action impact, and not spend so much money and that's the problem. The second a film costs over \$200 million, we give our industry out to the corporate world."**

In the seven years that many of us have spoken to Diesel, what remains consistent is his sense of passion. Never one to flinch from a challenge, Diesel says that there is nothing else he ever wanted to be, but an actor. **"I was an actor as long as I can remember."** The son of a theatre director and an astrologist, the actor says his movie heroes were the likes of Mel Gibson. **"The guy's been able to create what he feels**

the need to create, and that's the key."

Interview: Vin Diesel - The tough guy goes cuddly

March 02, 2005

Jeff Otto

FilmForce.IGN.com

Over the course of the past five years, Vin Diesel has done everything in his power to build his reputation as a tough guy action hero. From Pitch Black to Fast and the Furious to XXX, Diesel's gruff voice, shiny bald head and rippling muscles have solidified him as one of the heirs to departed action stars of the past such as Stallone, Segal and the California Guv-nah. Now, in one fell swoop, Diesel is about to negate everything he's built to play a Navy S.E.A.L. nanny in The Pacifier.

Taking a cue from past films like Mr. Nanny, Kindergarten Cop and Every Which Way But Loose, Diesel is making an attempt at sending up his tough image, and also trying to prove his comedy chops in the process. In Pacifier, Diesel plays Shane Wolfe, a military lifer not too familiar with the outside world, particularly suburbia. He gets a crash course in parenthood when he is assigned to protect the family of a scientist who developed an important invention that is being kept secret. Baddies are after the info, so Wolfe moves into the Plummer household and takes care of the five kids while the mother is away.

We spoke with Diesel about the film recently at the Pacifier press day in Los Angeles. In person, Diesel looks just as tough as he does on screen, but his attitude and actions are much more mellow. The voice is a little less gruff, the head is a little less shiny, and Diesel is, in general, a nice and easy going guy. During the course of the interview, he made constant jokes with director Adam Shankman and other stars of the film who were seated at nearby tables doing separate interviews.

The first and most obvious question we had for Diesel is, why did you decide to do this kind of film? **"If you think about my filmography, I have never done a movie that a kid could go see, except for Iron Giant, and I'm not even on the screen. So, when you have nieces and nephews saying, [talking in a high child's voice]: 'Uncle Vin, when am I going to be able to see your movies,' you want to do a film for them... I was actively looking for something with kids. This fell into place perfectly, because the script had already had a built-in element where the story plays on people's perceptions of my previous roles. It's already built into this story, and that was cool... It's not saying, 'Oh, forget that he's an action star, but rather] let's enroll that into this story, play that up and then flip it on it's ear and say, hey, you know really, this guy that, you know he saved the galaxy for us, he saved our world, we're okay. He now is confronted with the hardest task of all, family.'"**

"Career diversification ain't a bad thing," Diesel says of the role. **"Tom Hanks said, 'Do the films you are afraid of or the genres that are foreign.' But I have to say, and this may sound sappy, but when I went to movies with my whole family, I remember those experiences; they stand out a little bit more... When you go to the movies with your whole family, it's a different experience. For some reason, it's something that you're all doing together and you take away something special in that. This is the first film that you don't have to hire a babysitter for because the babysitter's in the movie."** (Laughs)

Just about anyone who's worked with kids or animals in Hollywood will tell you that you just shouldn't do it. Diesel doesn't agree. **"People that say that they shouldn't work with kids and shouldn't work with animals are people spending the money for the film... For me, I step aside and let the kids shine. It's so easy to let a nine-month-old baby smile at a camera... It's a very easy way to add value to the experience."**

On the animal side, however, Diesel did have an unfortunate encounter with the duck who co-stars in the film. **"The duck got a little carried away, if you know what I mean. I walked on set, it's a completely professional duck. [They say], 'The duck's done this a million times, put your finger out...' Okay, I've never done this with a duck before, I don't know what to expect... I'm in a scene with Faith Ford. They say, 'No matter what, it's not going to draw blood, it's not going to hurt. It's never drawn blood.' Okay, I'm going back and forth and CHOMP! [I get up] with a duck hanging on my ear... I'm looking for the director to yell 'Cut!' I'm wearing a duck earring. (Laughs) You should have seen everybody run from set. They were like, 'Ahhh, he's going to kill us...'"**

Taking the turn to do a comedy was a refreshing reprieve from the darker parts Diesel has played in his past works. **"The films that I do are deep, introspective, brooding roles that you're in this heavy headspace all the time. When you're doing The Pacifier, you're coming to set and the first thing you're thinking about is, 'I'm going to see these babies,' because the reward of seeing a nine month old smile when**

you show up on set is so heavy, you turn into mush. You can take the toughest guy on the planet, you put a nine month old baby on his chest for the whole film and he's just gonna be mush."

Up next for Diesel is another departure, playing the real life mobster Jack DiNorscio in Sidney Lumet's next film. **"Sidney Lumet was very, very easy to work with. He has a style, for me it was cake. Working with him was cake, working in the film was a different matter. [It's called] Find Me Guilty. Think about this, as an actor, you meet a human being, you make an unspoken contract, you say to that human being, 'I am going to play your life. I am going to be you and represent what you stand for. I am going to make your life a statement. I am going to immortalize you.' Three weeks into production, this man that you made the contract with dies. He [died] in the hospital from old age. He did 30 years in prison, came out for two years and then passes away three weeks into production. Now this is the first time I had ever played a real person, a true story, so that's a very intimate, strong connection you make."**

"[I was] not so much left without an anchor, [but] it somehow compounded the responsibility in a weird way, as you can imagine. I gained 30 pounds for the role, very extreme on this. I play older than I am, I do two and a half hours of make-up every morning. Very, very demanding, great cast like Peter Dinklage, Linus Roache, Ron Silver, Annabella Sciorra..."

Two of Diesel's biggest successes were *The Fast and the Furious* and *XXX*. Somewhat surprisingly, he turned down the sequels to both. We asked Diesel if these were decisions he regretted. **"Yeah, I'm glad I made that decision. I stand by the decisions that I make. I have to judge a script on the basis of story and character, regardless of whether it's a sequel or not... When I first was in this business, I was trying to do whatever I can. If a script comes in, I'm going to work on it and make it better and I'll do it.' As you get older, you realize how much time goes into these experiences and then the money doesn't somehow match out because you are giving a year away of your life. So any film that somebody does, especially a film that they are 100 percent committed to, they are in essence giving up a year of their own reality..."**

A S.E.A.L. Out of Water: Vin Diesel Radically Switches Gears

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TheMovieInsider.com

In starring roles in such blockbuster action adventures as *XXX* and *The Fast and the Furious*, Vin Diesel has quickly developed a reputation as one of Hollywood's fiercest—and most globally popular—male action heroes. Now, with *The Pacifier*, Diesel deftly switches gears, revealing the funnier, more humanly vulnerable side of his larger-than-life personality, while still using his trademark physical skills to pull off the film's fun-filled action and suburbia-shocking stunts.

From the first time he read the screenplay for *The Pacifier*, Diesel was drawn to the role of Shane Wolfe, knowing it would give him a unique opportunity to reveal himself to audiences as he never has before. He was especially intrigued by the idea of playing a man who turns the prototypical notion of a muscle-bound action hero on its head, and in so doing, playfully unraveling his own tough-guy persona. Though Shane Wolfe starts out as a steely soldier who seems to be an unmovable rock, both inside and out, he soon comes face-to-face with his own comic foibles—and yearning to be part of a family—as he is forced to babysit a group of kids who turn out to need him in ways that have nothing to do with his guts, brawn or ability to knock out one-armed push-ups.

"To me *The Pacifier* felt like a true classic Disney family comedy," says Diesel. **"It's about a man who's never really known a family, a guy who, as a Navy S.E.A.L., has always avoided getting close to anybody. Only now, without any training for it, he's forced into having to try to be a caring father figure to these five unruly kids. Shane is a great character because he's completely amazing at just about every military and fighting maneuver known to man— but the most everyday chores, like changing a diaper, just bring him to his knees. So he's about to go through some very big changes. And he is about to be surprised by just how ridiculously tough, and yet how deeply rewarding, the family life he thought he would never have can be."** Diesel continues: **"I was immediately attracted to this story because I thought it would be a whole lot of fun, not to mention very liberating, for me to explore comedy and a character who undergoes a real transformation. I liked that even though there's some great action in the film, the focus is just as much on humor, emotion and the relationships Shane forms with the Plummer family. I have to say after doing the movie that it was probably the most enjoyable film experience I've ever had."**

The Pacifier came to Diesel through Spyglass Entertainment, who hoped the screen hero would consider trying something new and different in the form of this kid-centered family adventure. Says producer Gary

Barber: *"We thought The Pacifier was a great family comedy and we also thought Vin Diesel was the one action star with the acting range to really be able to carry off the role. It's not that dissimilar to when Arnold Schwarzenegger came out of his Terminator movies to do Kindergarten Cop and Twins. Vin has such an extremely likeable personality, and we felt this transition would really work well for him. Once on the set, he proved to have incredible comic timing."*

Adds producer Roger Birnbaum: *"There are not too many actors who could play Shane Wolfe. You need someone physically imposing with tremendous action skills, of course, but also someone willing and able to break out of that genre and suddenly transform into a softer, kinder, funnier version of that. We were thrilled to have a chance with The Pacifier to let people see Vin Diesel's talent in a whole new way."*

Sums up producer Jonathan Glickman: *"There's just something phenomenally funny about seeing the world's toughest action star trying to take control of things with a baby on his back and another baby strapped to his front! Along with the magical relationship that developed between Vin and the kids, we knew we had something special."*

With Diesel set in the role of Shane Wolfe, the producers next approached Adam Shankman, who has become one of Hollywood's most sought-after comedy directors on the heels of such hits as The Wedding Planner and the recent Bringing Down the House, which set off comic sparks between the odd-couple pairing of Steve Martin and Queen Latifah. *"Adam is a very funny, very bright populist filmmaker who we thought was the perfect choice,"* explains Birnbaum. *"He did a tremendous job of managing a motion picture that combines an enormous number of elements—action, comedy, emotion, big stars, little kids, and even a duck. I also think that Vin really came to trust Adam's instincts—which was a great help as he made the transition to the kind of actor that he proves himself to be in The Pacifier."*

Shankman was immediately enthusiastic about the project. He got a kick out of the way The Pacifier transforms a bandolier-sporting Navy S.E.A.L. into a bottle-wielding babysitter, and saw the potential to create a unique mix out of the story's spirited comedy, kid-oriented action and poignant tale of a family rediscovering the power of their love for one another.

"Vin Diesel's Shane Wolfe is a stranger set loose in a strange land," Shankman comments. *"The world he finds himself in at the Plummer's suburban household seems to be a world that has absolutely nothing to do with the military training that has so far been his entire life. Yet, somehow, when he applies everything he's got—his physical prowess, his strategic mind and finally his heart—to these five out-of-control kids, amazing things happen. I really enjoyed the humor of the film's premise. I mean, where else are you ever going to see Vin Diesel changing a diaper? And I especially enjoyed the way it's combined with a story about rediscovering the importance of family."*