



## Vincent, man, go!(actor Vincent D'Onofrio)(Brief Article)

Entertainment Weekly; 11/28/1997; Russo, Tom

As the bugged-out alien interloper in *Men in Black*, he topped Agents K and J's cosmic caseload. How does the ever-changing Vincent D'Onofrio keep outrunning stardom?

IT'S STRANGELY FITTING THAT Vincent D'Onofrio chose *Men in Black* to give his most widely seen performance to date. The 38-year-old New York actor has such a chameleonic streak, you feel like you've been flashed with a neuralizer every time you see him in a new role. Zap.

Who starred in last winter's *The Whole Wide World* as Conan creator Robert E. Howard? Who was Keanu Reeves' no-account brother in last year's *Feeling Minnesota*? Or the young Orson Welles in 1994's *Ed Wood*? The screenwriter haplessly offed by Tim Robbins in 1992's *The Player*? Lili Taylor's fisherman beau in 1988's *Mystic Pizza*? How about the 6-foot-4-inch actor's first big splash, playing the tubby Marine recruit who's bullied and brutalized until he winds up one jelly doughnut short of a dozen in 1987's *Full Metal Jacket*?

JFK, *Dying Young*, *Malcolm X*, *Mr. Wonderful*, *Household Saints*, *Strange Days*... In over a decade of screen work, the Brooklyn-born actor has made nearly 30 films. But surely, spending the summer getting under America's skin as a reanimated corpse was a career-changing role in terms of--"In terms of nothing," he says with an easygoing laugh. The studios "never look at your work as a whole, only the last thing you did, which is why a lot of leading actors are playing the same roles over and over." He shrugs. "I'm a character actor. I've always gotten lots of scripts for independents. If they're good and I have the time and it's not going to"--he laughs again--"cost me too much money, then I do as many as I can."

Which makes life ever busy for D'Onofrio, who has a young daughter from a past relationship with *Player* costar Greta Scacchi. He followed up *MiB* with projects big and little. In March comes Richard Linklater's *The Newton Boys*, in which he'll star with Matthew McConaughey and Ethan Hawke in a true story of bank-robbing brothers; with *World* director Dan Ireland he's just finished *The of Gary* (Not His Real Name), cast as a bisexual former porn star. "The man changes himself completely with every part, physically and mentally," marvels Ireland, noting that D'Onofrio shed 40 pounds and sports waist-length hair for the role. "Doing *The Whole Wide World*, there were times I forgot to call 'cut' because I was sitting there watching Robert E. Howard."

Also upcoming are a TV remake of *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three* for ABC and a showy role on the Dec. 5 episode of NBC's *Homicide: Life on the Street*, in which D'Onofrio and Andre Braugher's Det. Frank Pembleton share the screen almost exclusively. Will you recognize him? Don't bet on it.

COPYRIGHT 1997 Time, Inc.

HighBeam Research, LLC. © Copyright 2004. All rights reserved.