



## 60 SECONDS: Vincent D'Onofrio

Andrew Williams - Tuesday, March 21, 2006



Actor Vincent D'Onofrio got his big break when he gained 32kg for his role in *Full Metal Jacket*. Now, he has become a cult favourite thanks to his role as kooky detective Robert Goren in TV show *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*. He also stars in hit indie film *Thumbsucker*, as the father of a 17-year-old boy who still sucks his thumb. *Thumbsucker* is out now on DVD.

What attracted you to the film?

It was a story about a family but it was also a story about each individual in that family, who they are and their evolution in the film. It approached each character thoroughly. It's rare when you find stuff like that. These days, when you have a film that's from the perspective of a young person, everyone around is very cartoony and not very multi-levelled.

The main character is a teenager who sucks his thumb. Have you got any bad habits?

Yeah, but I wouldn't discuss them with you.

Do you pick your nose?

No.

What was it like working with Tilda Swinton in *Thumbsucker*?

Incredible. She is just so lovely and so talented. When you work with people like that, they make your performance even better. She's great, she's very clever and a very calm actress, very soothing to be around. She's just a lovely woman.

She was in *Narnia*. Would you do a fantasy blockbuster?

Yeah, they're a blast. When you do a part like that, it's about the studio and the director; the pressure's not all on you. I did it once in *Men In Black*, when I played an alien. You have a lot of freedom. It's great fun and I would do it again but I'll have to wait a couple more years before I'm free to do a four-month movie. That's

how long those movies take. It would be great to play a bad guy in superhero films but I'm not available. I'd love to do it just for the hell of it.

I say dumb things about President Bush and I speak my mind and people just run with it

You're 6ft 4in - that would come in handy playing a supervillain.  
I guess it would, yeah. The makers asked me about being a villain in the Spider-Man series but I wasn't available. I'm not a comic-book guy, so I don't know what the bad guy was - we'll just have to wait and see ...

You've played Orson Welles in two different films. Did you portray him in different ways?

The first time was for Tim Burton in Ed Wood. I didn't feel like I did the right thing for him in that film, so I wrote and appeared in a short film called Five Minutes, Mr Welles. The Tim Burton thing was a true story about Ed Wood meeting Orson at a restaurant. I replicated Orson for that and I thought I did a really poor job. Then I thought of this story that's based on fact, which takes place during the shooting of The Third Man, and I wrote the half-hour script. It's a totally different approach to the character, totally different acting approach and a totally different story. It's Orson at his most raw. It's like seeing Orson, not as a genius, but as a man.

Were you a fan of detective shows before you starred in one?

God, no.

Isn't that a bit unfortunate since you spend all year making one?

The cool thing about my character is that I don't approach him like a detective. I approach him like this guy who does whatever he wants and has no social boundaries. On the street, even in Europe, wherever I go, people come up to me and say: 'That guy that you play, he's bizarre.' They never say 'that detective'. It's a good thing.

He's eccentric. Is there supposed to be anything medically wrong with him?

Yeah, he's a wacky guy and you're not going to know what's the matter with him until the end. We'll have to make something up. Originally, I wanted him to have porphyria - the disease in the movie The Madness Of King George - where you can't stop talking, have no editing system and your pee turns blue. I thought it'd be really cool for him to have that because he does talk a lot but apparently the medication now means you don't get those symptoms. We'll have to think of something else.

Who are your favourite actors?

Jake Gyllenhaal is one and Heath Ledger's turning into an incredible actor. He was really bad when he started - now he has invented characters and you can see he's working. He's really good now. I'll go see a movie that he's in, just to see if he's still putting the work in.

Were you bad when you started?

I look back on my work and a lot's crap. We want to work after acting school but it doesn't mean we're ready.

Some US tabloids have given you a hard time for being a Democrat. Is that still a problem?

I say dumb things about President Bush and I speak my mind and people just run with it. Last time I did a radio show in London, they asked me what song would I play for the president. I said They're Coming To Take Me Away. People find out about s\*\*t like that. So when I got sick on set, one paper turned it into me flipping and punching people out, which is total nonsense. But what I think about our president isn't total nonsense.

Was the press reaction just a one-off?

Well, I seem to do things which get that reaction. We were banned from saying which way we were voting and weren't allowed to wear pins before the election. I immediately dedicated the entire side of my camper to how much of an a\*\*hole Bush is. Oh dear, please don't say I said the president's an a\*\*hole.