

The Un-Hollywood Actor

By Ramin Setoodeh

Newsweek

Updated: 12:05 a.m. ET Jan. 22, 2006

Vincent D'Onofrio has starred in dozens of films, working alongside some of cinema's biggest names. But somehow, he doesn't quite fit in.

Jan. 21, 2006 - One of Hollywood's great character actors, Vincent D'Onofrio's roles have spanned "Full Metal Jacket" to "The Cell" with Jennifer Lopez to "Law & Order: Criminal Intent." In his latest film, "Thumbsucker," D'Onofrio plays the father of a high school boy who drastically changes after taking prescription drugs. With the "Thumbsucker" DVD coming out this week, D'Onofrio spoke to NEWSWEEK's Ramin Setoodeh. Excerpts:

NEWSWEEK: What was it like playing Tilda Swinton's husband in "Thumbsucker"?

Vincent D'Onofrio: Well, what was it like working with Tilda is the question. I loved it. You kind of feed each other and it rides to a higher level. She is the queen to me.

The queen of independent cinema?

To me, I don't think that way. I notice actors. I notice when their performance is outstanding.

What are you working on now?

I've got a film coming out in the summer called "The Break Up" with Vince Vaughn.

And Jennifer Aniston?

Yeah. Jennifer's in it, too. This is my third film with Vince. We know each other very well—we're like brothers.

IMDB.com lists 54 titles under your name. What's your favorite role?

I have a couple of them. "Full Metal Jacket" is always going to be right up there. Stanley Kubrick kind of started my career off. I was doing nothing but theater before then. I couldn't ask for a better set up than he gave me. I did a movie called "The Whole Wide World." I really liked playing that character.

With Renee Zellweger. She later thanked you at the Academy Awards, after winning for "Cold Mountain."
That's embarrassing.

Why is it embarrassing?

It's a weird thing. I'm not over there. I don't know much about what goes on over there. It's always strange when my name comes up in the world over there.

What world?

The whole movie-making thing. I stayed out of it my whole career. I don't really get involved too much in it.

Why don't you get involved?

I do my own thing. I have a family. I don't go to any Hollywood events, ever. If they ask me to support the film that I'm in, I'll go to the opening—but only because I feel like I'm obligated to go.

Do you have celebrity friends?

I have a couple of friends. Ethan Hawke is a very good friend of mine. There are friends that I see every once in a while from back in the day—every once in a while, if I go to Hollywood—but they're not my best friends.

Is it easier today for smaller films to get made in Hollywood?

I don't think anybody knows what kind of movies should be made right now. I think that's why a lot of film actors are going to television. Independent films these days are financed if there's a star in them. But the film world is too confusing and outrageous. They're only using a handful of leading people and a handful of supporting people in every film it seems like. But it's good to know that every once in a while a good actor comes up and they pay attention to him. Like this kid, Jake ... what's his last name?

Gyllenhaal?

He's definitely a talented kid.