



*Tribute's Bonnie Laufer talks to Vincent D'onofrio about his role in *The Salton Sea*.*

**B.L. Wow, that's quite the character you play in *The Salton Sea*. This Pooh-Bear, a cocaine-snorting kingpin, is not the most attractive guy! I understand that you were the filmmaker's first choice to play him!**

V.D. I didn't know that until people began saying it today, but that's nice to know, I guess.

**B.L. So how do you feel about that?**

V.D. Maybe that's why the director was so nice to me the whole time! Obviously, I feel great about it; it's nice to know!

**B.L. D.J Caruso, the director, said not only could you pull this off but he was pretty confident that you'd be willing to take it on. Why is that? Why do you gravitate towards these kind of quirky roles?**

V.D. Well I am glad that he was so confident. I would have asked for more money if I had known that! I guess over the years, I have established a kind of consciousness about my career that I can play different types of things. I'm a character actor and probably for some reason while he was reading the script, he saw me in the part and knew that I could handle it. I would assume it was as simple as that.

**B.L. Do you make a conscious effort to look for these kinds of roles?**

V.D. No, I don't sit down and think, "I wonder what kind of extreme character I'll play next?" But, I like good parts and good stories. It doesn't matter if they are extreme characters or good guys or bad guys; as long as they are good, chunky roles. So, I guess in a way, I am attracted to them. They don't always have to be so extreme but if they are written well, then I'm there.

**B.L. You really took over this part; you were totally unrecognizable for most of the film. It was such an incredible transformation. Most of the actors lost weight to play drug addicts, but you put on the pounds. How much did you gain?**

V.D. I put on somewhere between thirty and forty pounds.

**Q: Was that your choice? Because you have done that before for a role.**

V.D. Yes, but it wasn't really about weight; it was about having met somebody in my past who was very similar to the guy that I played. So, basically, I just took his character and put him in that circumstance. I thought that it would be an interesting choice to go the opposite way of what people think drug addicts look like. I knew that it would still work because drugs don't only affect your weight but they make you unhealthy and bit nuts. So, I knew that it was a legitimate choice and that it would probably be one that nobody else would make. That's why I did it.

**B.L. You said that you will never do this again; is this true?**

V.D. I think I have put enough weight on and taken weight off -- now it's time to stop.

**B.L. How's your nose doing? In this film, you don't have one! How gross was that?**

V.D. It's growing back!

**B.L. I'm sorry, but that was a really creepy part of your character the nose thing!**

V.D. It was written like that.

**B.L. Do you like working in films where you have tools to transform yourself?**

V.D. Sometimes it's fun. If it's gimmicky, I won't do it. When it's not, I'll do it. Pooh-Bear wasn't a difficult makeup job. Basically, we just plopped this thing on my nose. Then there is one scene where you see the hole in my face and that's all done with computer graphics. They just put dots on my nose, so it wasn't a lot of makeup time or anything like that.

**B.L. Your day job is on the TV series *Law & Order Criminal Intent*; you play a pretty normal guy! Is that the way you stay sane in between all of these other roles?**

V.D. Maybe it puts my karma metre into the grain a little bit. He's not that normal. He's actually kind of a weird guy, if you ask me, but I am having fun doing it. It's a really good show. He's kind of a contemporary Sherlock Holmes guy. I like it, it's an interesting part.