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Just Don't Ask Her To Take It Easy On Me

By THE FADER
June 05, 2006

We've already expressed how stoked we are about the new Criterion edition of *Dazed And Confused* (available on DVD tomorrow, June 6), but to get even more back story we exchanged emails with Wiley Wiggins, one of the film's stars. As one of the few actual teenagers and Texans in the cast, Wiggins played the indelible Mitch — the incoming freshman who over the course of the day goes from gang-bang paddling victim to one of the bros. Get all the good stuff after the jump.

How were you cast in the film?

The co-producer Anne Walker McBay was passing out cards for a casting call around the University Of Texas campus where I used to hang out. She seemed really emphatic about me coming in and reading, which concerned me a little bit, but when I looked at the card and saw that it mentioned *Slacker*, I got pretty excited. The early readings were very informal, mostly Rick [writer/director Richard Linklater] talking to kids in small groups about school, partying, music, etc. We gradually started doing line readings with one another in different roles. As the casting sessions narrowed down, it became clear that most of the local casting was being done to find background performers and featured extras. I think it might have been a surprise to some that they gave me a lead part. The freshman girl character played by Christin Hinojosa was originally going to be played by Alicia Witt, but was recast to a local at the last minute (I think she had some sort of contractual obligation that kept her from being in the film). Anne and Rick really seemed to be rooting for me and spent a lot of time helping me along when we actually got to the final casting sessions in Los Angeles.

I take you were already of fan of Linklater. Was *Slacker* a big deal in Austin?

I had seen it a couple of times by then. I think it was a pretty big deal in Austin, which is so strange now considering what an unconventional movie it is. At the time though, Austin was a much smaller city, the subculture was thriving, and there was a lot of room for a local movie to gain momentum. Things are different now — not necessarily worse, but a movie like *Slacker* might have gotten lost if it came out now. It would need a bigger gimmick.

How much of your own personality is in Mitch?

At the time I think Mitch was probably the kind of kid I wished I was. I was a pretty maladjusted 15-year-old — very awkward, wanting to be an adult really badly. I think the obvious change that Mitch goes through from being a twitchy little kid to "one of the guys" illustrates that it's a character. It wasn't a difficult one to play, though.

It sounds like a lot of revisions were made to the script once the actors were cast and through rehearsals. How similar is the Mitch is the original script to the one in the film?

My lines really didn't change a lot. Rick was constantly revising lines with actors so that they would sound more natural, but the content was all pretty much the same, at least with my character.

Much has been made of Mitch's nervous habit of touching his nose, was that a natural personal idiosyncrasy or something you and Richard Linklater came up with?

A little of both. Rick very chivalrously takes responsibility for it on the commentary track on the DVD. I think that it was really a nervous habit that I had. That it shows up so many times though was an editing decision, and that was all Rick's. A few people have written me and said that they found it human in a way that you usually don't see in movies — even "teens" (usually played by adults) in most films are stylized and actor-ly. When someone acts like a normal flinchy kid it seems really jarring. Obviously it drove plenty of people crazy. I don't really have an opinion about it. It did seem to make the character memorable to some people at least.

What was the atmosphere like during filming? On one hand it sounds like Richard Linklater was under a lot of pressure from the studio and the producers, which I assume would make it very stressful, but then again there seemed to be a lot of fun going on with so many young actors making their first real movie.

Rick did an incredible job of shielding us from the soul-crushing amount of stress that we all now realize he must have been under. The closest I ever got to seeing him mad was when he tossed a plastic cup on the ground after we filmed the scene where Mitch gets busted outside the baseball field. Kahane [Corn]'s documentary on the new discs goes into that night in detail. If I had known that the movie was in jeopardy that night, it would have ruined me. Rick gave me my performance that night by giving me a vacuum where all I had to worry about was what I was doing—getting made fun of for my shitty pitching by a team of little leaguers and then getting mock-beaten by a bunch of crazy jocks.

During the making of the film did you hang out with the rest of the cast off set and on the weekends?

I was younger and kind of goofy, plus I wasn't staying at the hotel with the actors who were from LA, I was still living at home. I mostly spent time with the other actors when we were rehearsing or between takes. A few of the actors were incredibly nice and protective of me: Jason [London], Rory [Cochrane], Anthony [Rapp], Adam [Goldberg], Michelle [Burke]... But Milla [Jovovich] and her boyfriend Shawn [Andrews] were kind of too Hollywood for me to fathom at the time, and I was probably snottier to them than I should have been.

I read that Shawn Andrews was supposed to have a larger role, but that he didn't get along with the rest of the cast. Can you give me any more of an explanation?

I hate to say anything bad about anybody at this point, especially so many years after when we've all become different people. At the time though, he seemed like he took himself pretty seriously, but it didn't show in his work ethic. His performances were fine, but he would do shit like improv once all the lines had been hammered down, something he could have done during rehearsal. It wasted time on a shoot where time was absolutely essential.

Was there a separation between the actors who had come from LA and those who were Texas locals?

Yes, but I think it was mainly due to the fact that the LA actors all stayed together at a hotel and spent their time off together, and they all got really close to one another. I felt a lot closer to Rick and Anne and Kahane and the crew.

In the behind the scenes section of the new DVD there is footage of you going to your first day of school after spending the summer making the film and you're talking about how you are unsure how being in the film will affect your profile at school and how you prefer anonymity. How did the film end up changing your perception at high school? In life in general?

I dropped out of school before anyone there really caught on to the film and that I was in it. I was already so weird about school, it was just an excuse to leave. Luckily I never expected to have any kind of an acting career afterwards, and the other parts I've had have all been happy surprises. Being in a few movies has helped me get my foot in the door in a lot of other artsy pursuits. But I do wonder if not having to work or go to school between the ages of 17 to 20 didn't make me kind of complacent. I think I might have gone a lot farther with some of the stuff I do if I had not had movies to buffer me.

How old were you when you dropped out? What did you do instead?

About 16. At the time I wasn't doing a lot. Making a lot of bad teenager art. The best stuff I did was get involved with a company in Austin called FringeWare that ran a bookstore and put out a magazine of art, technology and weird stuff. It was the same cloud of talent as *Mondo 2000* and later *Wired*, but the Texas faction. I was involved in a lot of computer stuff, phone phreaking. I did a little writing and a little video work. I had some other acting roles but they were kind of peripheral: *Love And A .45* with Renee Zellweger and Rory Cochrane from *Dazed*, a movie called *Boys* with Winona Ryder and Lukas Haas who was also from Austin. Nothing super memorable. I made friends with David and Nathan Zellner who are two incredibly talented local filmmakers who I'm still working with. I've passed through so many weird occupations I can't even remember half of them. I wrote a sex advice column. I hung art in office buildings in Rhode Island with a man with one foot...

Were you surprised by the reception the film received, both the initial tepidness and then the eventual dedicated following?

We didn't really know what to expect. It really was a slow build up. It was our movie and we loved it and that was enough. That it became some kind of cult phenomenon was difficult to fathom, but pretty amazing.

Is there anything that was filmed that you wish had made it into the final cut?

The girls had a scene that they wrote together that was really cool, but didn't fit for whatever reason. I think it adds a lot to their characters.

Is this the scene of Parker Posey and Joey Lauren Adams on the hood of the car that's included in the Deleted Scenes on the new DVD?

That's the one. I think it showed a lot of love for the project that they came up with that, and it showed a lot of intelligence. I had such a crush on Parker back then!

Part of the appeal of *Dazed And Confused* was that even though it took place in Texas in the 70s, people found something universal about it. Was your high school experience anything like that?

I wasn't included in the groups in high school that had fun like that, if in fact they existed at all. Oddly enough though, I think the movie probably gave me the confidence to start spreading my social circles. As far as initiations or anything like that, I think you need to be in smaller town for that kind of weirdness.

You acted in and worked as an animator for *Waking Life*, have you and Richard Linklater maintained a friendship?

Absolutely. Rick is the greatest. I'm always kind of stunned and flattered by his ability to keep in touch, especially as busy as he is. He said some really nice stuff about me on the Criterion DVD too. I owe him a lot.

Have you maintained a relationship with any of the other cast members?

I don't live in LA now, so not as much as I have in the past. I used to be pretty close to Nicky Katt [who played the greaser Clint], but we kind of had a falling out. It was great to see everybody at the reunion a few years back. It's really strange to see how much everyone has changed in 13 (!) years. How much crazy stuff everyone has gone on to do. I wonder sometimes how I would have coped if I had somehow blown up and gotten huge like some of the other actors. I don't think I could have dealt with seeing myself on a tabloid whilst buying beer at the supermarket. I think I probably would have had a breakdown.

How long did you live in LA and how old were you while you were there? How was that experience for you?

After I did *Waking Life* I lived in LA for a year, thinking I might be able to pick up some acting or post-production work. As far as the acting went, there was a possible impending SAG strike so parts kind of dried up, plus when I had the extra added pressure of trying to survive off acting alone I found that I just curled up and died at auditions. As for post work, all I had to recommend me was a few seconds of animation I did for *Waking Life* and some short videos too weird to even mention. I ended up getting a job doing After Effects compositing and title animation for HBO soft porn. It was awful.

What are you up to now?

I'm doing short videos for art installations and visuals for a couple of local bands — The Octopus Project and Cue. I am going to be doing a little bit of acting in the next year or so, but I don't have any plans on trying to make a living at it. My day job right now is at Apple, but I'm looking for work I can do at home. Other stuff too, the prejudice of experience has taught me not to talk about stuff anymore before it happens, or I'll jinx it. I have some pages and a blog up at www.wileywiggins.com.

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MUSIC / HIP-HOP

Listen to Doechii's remix of Westside Gunn song "Egypt"

Doechii is completing side quests right now.

By DAVID RENSHAW
May 02, 2025

Johnny Nunez/WireImage

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Westside Gunn's "Egypt" begins with a sample of Doechii being interviewed about her favorite artists. She shouts out two rappers she loves; the late MF Doom and Gunn. The Griselda rapper used the clip in his *Heels Have Eyes* track and, inevitably, Doechii caught wind of it.

Read Next: Westside Gunn, Conway The Machine, and the Alchemist share vaulted 2016 project *Hall & Nash 2*

"If @westsidegunn feels me I don't need to be understood by nobody else fr!!" she posted when the original dropped in April.

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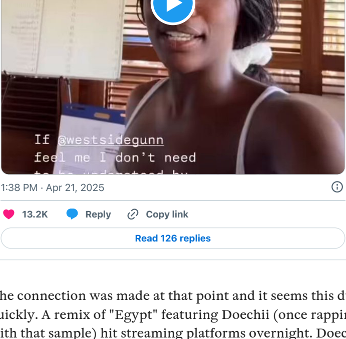

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The connection was made at that point and it seems this duo moves quickly. A remix of "Egypt" featuring Doechii (once rapping and once with that sample) hit streaming platforms overnight. Doechii taps into Westside Gunn's luxury rap universe, namedropping Roberto Cavalli, Chanel bags, and private jets as well as the problems faced when eating lamb chops while wearing grills. Check out her remix below.

Heels Have Eyes was released on April 18. The five track EP is Gunn's second release of 2025 after his song "Outlander," which dropped in February. Doechii, meanwhile, is enjoying a breakout year. Her song "Anxiety" is riding high in the Hot 100 and she was recently named one of the headliners of the NYC festival All Things Go.

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