

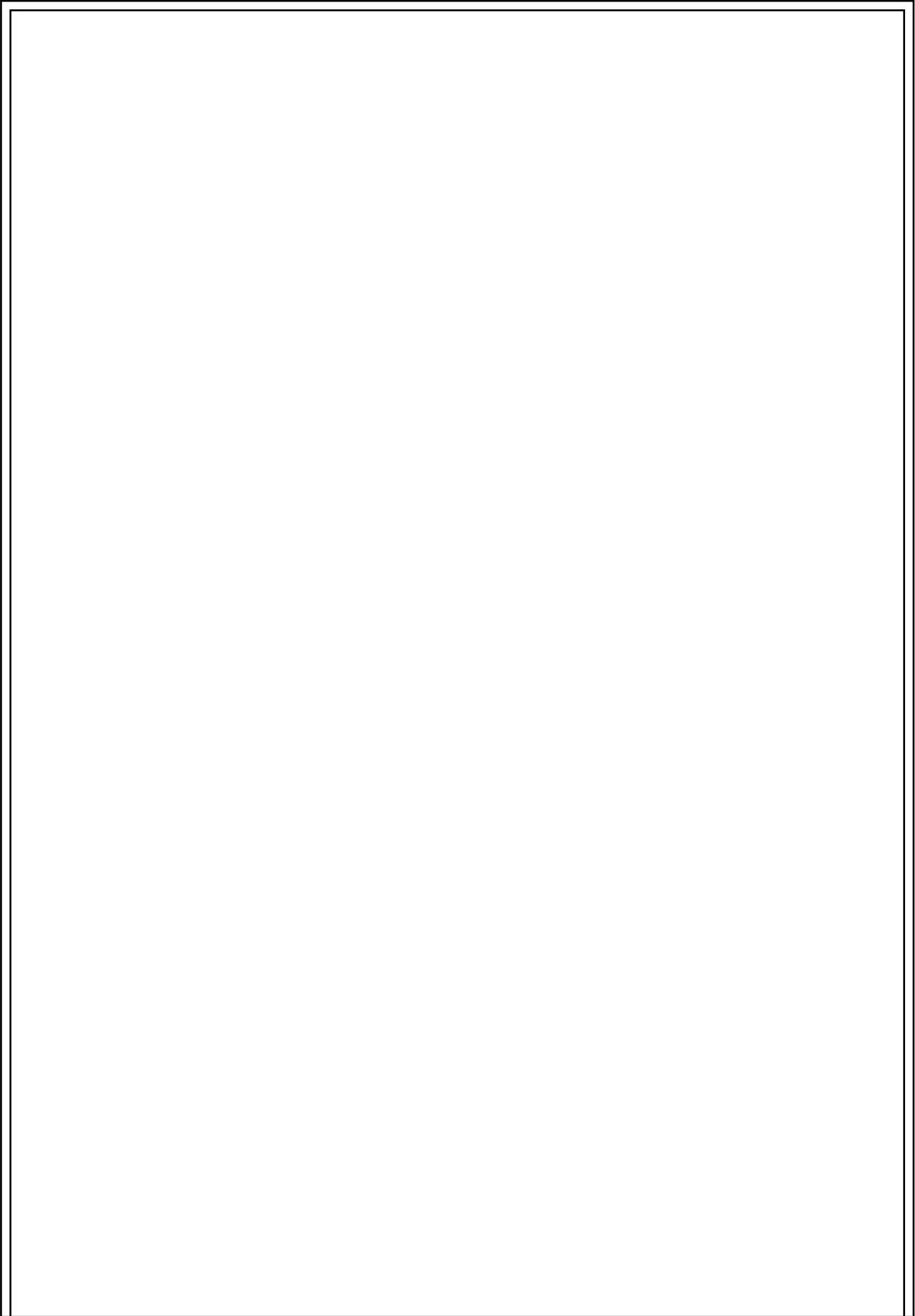
Interviews: Daniel Cudmore, Alex Meraz of ‘The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn -- Part 1’

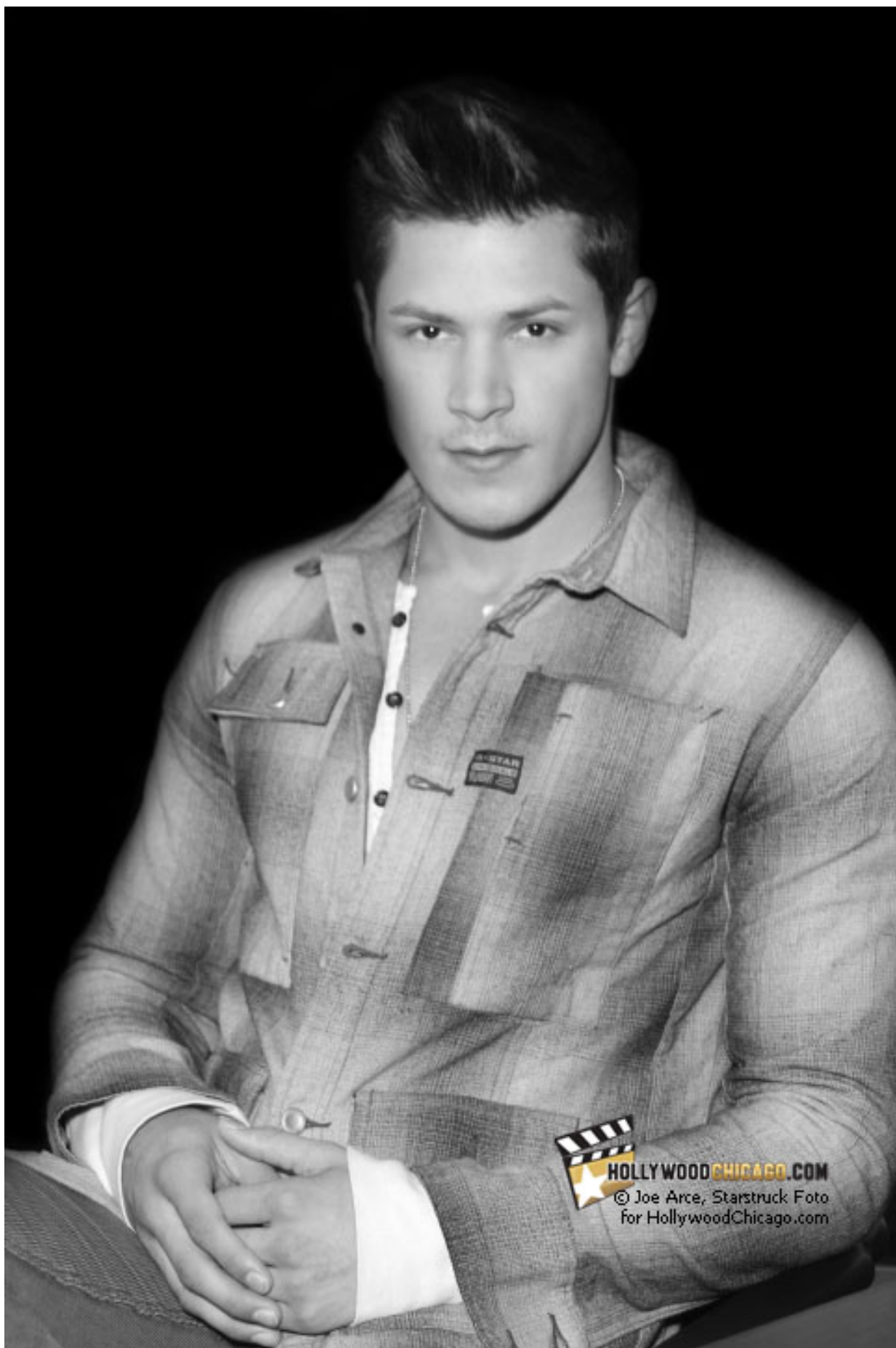
Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 8, 2011 - 6:43pm

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CHICAGO – For three weeks in a row, “The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn — Part 1” has been number one at the box office, to no real surprise. The thirst for this popular saga is almost as desperate as a vampire’s blood lust. Daniel Cudmore and Alex Meraz are part of the now well-known cast.

Cudmore and Meraz were in Chicago recently, introducing the latest Twilight film at the Hollywood Palms Cinema in Naperville, Illinois, and the Hollywood Blvd. in Woodridge. The two genial cast members are taking it all in, as the popularity of the saga seems brighter than ever. Cudmore portrays Felix, a Volturi Guard, and Meraz is Paul, one of the werewolf pack.





Twilight Time: Alex Meraz in Chicago, November 18, 2011
Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com.

HollywoodChicago.com got an opportunity to talk to both Daniel Cudmore and Alex Meraz during the Breaking Dawn premiere weekend. They talked about their careers and of course, their roles in the Twilight Saga universe.

HollywoodChicago.com: What timing or sense of story do you both attribute for the stunning success of the Twilight saga? What do you think is the main appeal?

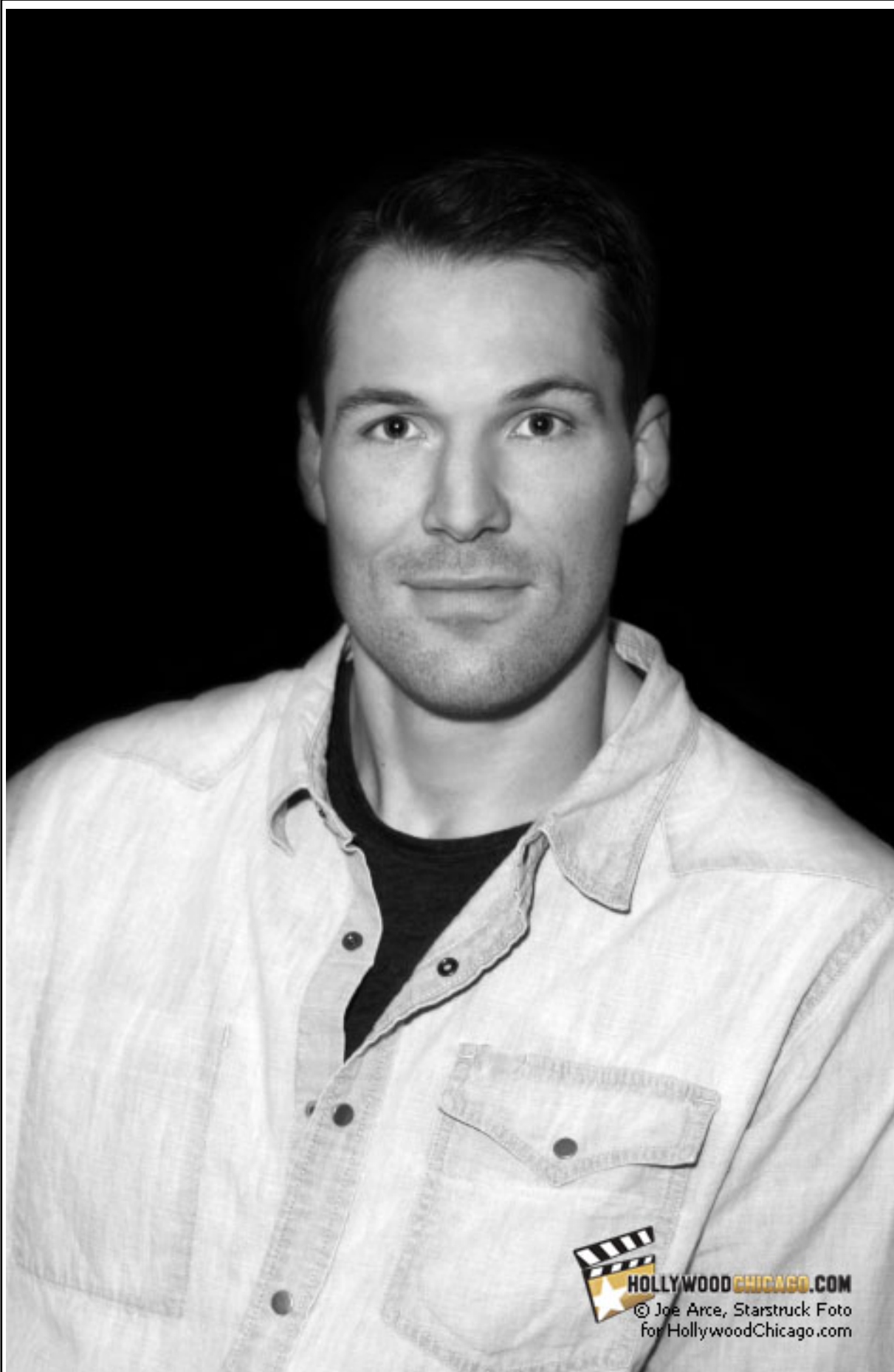
Daniel Cudmore: It started with the books, there is just something sexy about vampires for some people. I think also it's because Stephenie Meyers made all the vampire characters non-traditional, all young, and that's what hooked the younger fans. Then they did a great job transferring the books to the films, not straying from the books, and doing a great job casting.

Alex Meraz: Well, he just mentioned that vampires are sexy, let's not forget that werewolves are sexy, too. [laughs] He's right, people are fascinated by the supernatural, and want to see something bigger than life. We have this connection to animals as well, and the animalistic part of us is represented, with love and forbidden fruit, and all that stuff.

HollywoodChicago.com: Since you both started in the second film, 'New Moon,' describe the origins of your involvement, how did you get the call, what was the process of actually auditioning and how did you receive the news?

Meraz: I tried to get into the first movie, but I missed the boat because I went way too late. They had already cast the role of Jacob, so for the second one I was ready. Luckily I knew the casting director, who was casting all the Native American roles, through other stuff I had done through her. She told me she received over 60,000 inquiries all over the world. It was a crazy thing, so she started reaching out to only people she knew. Luckily I was on the short list. I got a call back, but I didn't hear anything for a month, I was terrified. Finally my manager called me, told me I didn't get the role I tried out for [Sam Uley], took a long pause, and told me I got the role of Paul.

Cudmore: There were some rumblings that Stephenie Meyer has seen 'X-Men' [Cudmore portrayed Colossus], and thought I'd be good for Emmett Cullen, but for some reason they were casting much younger, apparently I look older. [laughs] So nothing came of that, but they were filming New Moon in Vancouver, and I went in for an audition for a day player role. I went in and had fun with the audition, everybody else looked like surfer dudes and male models. I got a call back a week later, and found out it was for a vampire, and got all the lines. I did that, and they liked it, and went from there.



Daniel Cudmore in Chicago, November 18, 2011

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com.

HollywoodChicago.com: What have you learned about your characters or tribes when you read the books, and how did you incorporate what you learned into your characters?

Cudmore: For my character, there wasn't a whole lot. So I just tried to take certain elements out of the book and some ideas, just a direction to build a back story. At the same time, Stephenie Meyer was on set, and I would fire questions off of her based on what I came up with, and she gave me great feedback.

Meraz: She does write open characterizations. I asked her about my character on the set, she told me she has a lot of siblings and cousins, so she named a bunch of characters in the book after them. But she had this brother, apparently she doesn't like him, and he was like bugging her to be in the book. She finally wrote the character, and named him Paul. That was her explanation to me. Luckily I also did my own research. There were some good moments in the books, he's part of the tribe and has responsibility with the culture. I've done a lot of outreach on Native American reservations, and there is always a fear that Americans have stolen that culture. So out of respect I made sure I read up on the tribe and had an understanding. It did ground me in some sort of reality.

HollywoodChicago.com: I'm going to ask you separate questions now. Alex, do the Native American actors compare notes about their experiences as American Indians, and how do you honor your Native American past?

Meraz: Half of the actors I already knew, the Native American actor pool is pretty small. It felt like we already had a community going on. We would talk mostly about how there wasn't many jobs for Native American actors, and if there is that job goes to the one person who always gets cast. [laughs] It was nice that the pool opened up a bit, we were all glad to not only play a Native, but a Native in a contemporary setting – no horseback, feathers. shooting arrows or war whoops. [laughs] Since it's a worldwide phenomenon, we knew that we'd be role models and other Native Americans would be looking up to us.

HollywoodChicago.com: I'm going to ask you the same question I asked Burt Reynolds. What was your biggest fear in making the transition from high level athlete – in your case, rugby – to actor, and how did you get over that fear to get to the next level?

Cudmore: The first thing about being an athlete is that you do it for so long, it's the only thing you know. To actually shut the door on that [Cudmore had a career ending injury], and have your body start to fail on you, was a tough place to be. At the same time, I did think I was meant to do something else. I found that in transitioning to actor, it was different because every time I would play a sport it would come quickly and easily, but stepping into the acting world – although the jobs came quickly – my skill wasn't there. For me, I had to swallow my pride and work even harder at it. The tough part was that acting skills wasn't coming as quickly as sports. It's not something you can learn right away. I had to give up the ego, become more vulnerable and realize it was okay to fail. It's part of taking a chance, similar to sports but not as easy.

HollywoodChicago.com: Okay, last one for you both. Give me a one sentence summation of Bill Condon as a director on set for the latest film.

Meraz: Enjoyable, relaxed, a real people person.

Cudmore: An extremely talented director who gives actors a chance to act.

"The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 1" continues it's worldwide run. Featuring Daniel Cudmore, Alex Meraz, Taylor Lautner, Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson and Anna Kendrick. Adapted by Melissa Rosenberg from the Twilight Saga novels by Stephenie Meyer. Directed by Bill Condon. Rated "PG-13." For upcoming special events at Hollywood Palms Cinema in Naperville, Illinois, and Hollywood Blvd in Woodridge, [click here](#). [13]



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