

## Interview: Rob Riggle, Jake Johnson, Damon Wayans Jr. of ‘Let’s Be Cops’

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CHICAGO – When the assignment was to find a comedy team to take on impersonating police officers, funny men Jake Johnson and Damon Wayans Jr. – of the TV series “New Girl” – fit the uniforms perfectly for the new film, “Let’s Be Cops.” Add in the always hilarious Rob Riggle, and let the games begin.

Riggle is a well known comic character presence on “The Daily Show” and films like “The Hangover,” “21 Jump Street,” “Big Miracle” and the upcoming “Dumb and Dumber To.” Riggle is also famous for having served in the Marines and Marine Reserves for a total of 23 years – retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel – and began his comedy career after his first military stint.



Damon Wayans Jr. and Jake Johnson in ‘Let’s Be Cops’

*Photo credit: 20th Century Fox*

Damon Wayans Jr. and Jake Johnson are practically a comedy duo. They portray pals Coach and Nick on Zooey Deschanel’s sitcom “New Girl,” and are best-friends-turned-fake-policemen in “Let’s Be Cops.” Wayans comes from the comedy family of his father Damon, and his uncles Keenan, Shawn and Marlon – The Wayans Brothers - and also was on ABC-TV’s “Happy Endings” sitcom. Jake Johnson is doing more film work, having appeared in the independent favorites “Safety Not Guaranteed” and “Drinking Buddies,” and has a role in the 2015 film “Jurassic World.”

HollywoodChicago.com interviewed all three co-stars of “Let’s Be Cops,” and found out about a prank that Jim Carrey liked to play on the

Wayans family.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Damon, what attracted you to 'Let's Be Cops,' and how did you know you could make the character of Chang work?

**Damon Wayans Jr.:** Initially, what attracted me to the film was the premise. It's like a twist on a pretty familiar genre, the cop comedy, and the twist is they're not really cops. I liked that they got into a lot of trouble because of that, and I liked the action at the end. When I heard that Jake's name was floated around as the co-star, I called him and said I'd do it if he did it. They helped my decision.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Jake, in the way you interpreted your character, you seemed to really be into being a fake cop. What inner Serpico or Barney Miller did you access to pretend to love being a pretend cop?

**Jake Johnson:** Mine was David Caruso from 'N.Y.P.D. Blue.' This is Caruso before the CSI 'glasses' bit. When he was a young redhead kicking ass on that show, he was awesome. It was a fun character, and I've always wanted to be a cop – in a portrayal, not on the streets [laughs]. Damon and I, when we talked about it, wanted to do something different. We liked that world, but wanted to give it a slant.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Rob, I have a serious question, since you're ex-military. Since you know the routine and methods of battle strategy, do you think the police in America are becoming too militarized or that the crime is such that we need those types of society calming techniques?

**Rob Riggle:** I don't know if I can speak to it, because I don't think I know the situation well enough, as far as what is happening on the streets for cops. What I do know is that you don't want a society without laws. I've been in countries where there is no law, and it's a terrifying place to be, unless you have a gun, and even then it's still a tough situation. Law and order should be the order of the day.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Damon, you were juggling two popular sitcoms at once. What did realize were the two biggest differences or even more strange similarities between the characters of Brad ['Happy Endings'] and Coach ['New Girl']?

**Wayans** I always felt that they were really different. That's what attracted me to the Coach character on 'New Girl.' He was nothing like Brad, who is a metrosexual type guy who is happy to be with his wife. Coach is opposite, the fighter of love, but at his core he is very sensitive. As far as their similarities, the writers often have like-minds when it comes to comedy, and both those shows have pop culture references, so often they're in the same ballpark when it comes to jokes.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Jake, what was the key to creating that delicate dance that you and Olivia Wilde had in 'Drinking Buddies,' and was the final scene already in the script when you read it or did it come from the evolution of the production?

**Johnson:** First, the chemistry is built out of Joe Swanberg's style. It's a credit to him as a director that there is no script, everything is improvised. Everything is meant to be natural. You have a solid outline, but he does some really unique things as a director – one of which is that we all name our own characters. That might seem insignificant, but it really made me care about the character, because I named him after my new nephew Luke. I know that someday my nephew would watch it, so I wanted it to be good. Also he lets us create our own backstories, and didn't add anything to that.

As far the ending, we knew Luke and Kate [Wilde's character] weren't going to be together. The premise of the film is that Luke was with someone who is great, but then he had somebody else who he really kind of wanted, even though he knew they would be bad for each other. Luke was on the edge of settling down, but he wanted to look one more time. That was the movie Joe, Olivia and I talked about, we didn't know how the ending would come out, but we knew they inevitably would not be together.



Rob Riggle is Office Segars in ‘Let’s Be Cops’  
Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

**HollywoodChicago.com:** How many ‘takes’ of the ending was there?

**Johnson:** We did it once. Joe has a great line, ‘let’s allow ourselves to be happy with it, and move on.’ The director of photography covered the scene and got what he needed, it felt right, and we allowed ourselves to be happy with it.

**Riggle:** I was suppose to do a part in the film, but I couldn’t get out of hosting the ESPN Awards.

**Johnson:** In everything I do, I try to get Damon or Rob into, because not only are they amazing talents, but great guys. So when you work with people that you know are good – and when the lights come on they’re going to deliver – we always try to pull each other in.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Rob, what were your favorite sitcoms as a kid?

**Riggle:** There were only three channels back then, and I wasn’t a going-out kind of kid, so it was the ‘Love Boat’ and ‘Fantasy Island’ Saturday line-up on ABC, and my dad would make popcorn, and we’d watch it. We also loved ‘Monday Night Football’ and ‘Dukes of Hazzard.’ I could do that line up now and be happy.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You’ve done a number of TV sitcoms. What is the hardest part of getting the rhythm of those things right, especially in the era of more commercials than show in that half hour?

**Riggle:** I’ve never been a regular, so I get to come in and have some fun, and not have to worry about a rhythm, other than that story that week.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Damon, when did you realize as a kid that the family business was comedy. When did you first put two and two together, and what was the weirdest encounter you’ve ever had with a Wayans Brothers project, as far as how you came across it?

**Wayans** As a kid, I never thought about it like that – I have a huge family. For all those doing comedy, there is just as many not doing it. There are just as many flight attendants and med students in the family as comedians. It was always a balance.

Dad was good friends with Jim Carrey though, back in the ‘In Living Color’ days, and Jim would always be at the house. That would be fun, because he’d always be doing something crazy. I remember once he waited for us to come home, and then fell out of a tree onto our car, and his face slid off the windshield like a cartoon. And this was at nine o’clock at night [laughs].

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Jake, you have been in Comedy Central’s ‘Drunk History.’ Do you like your history written by the winners or do you prefer Howard Zinn’s ‘People’s History of the United States?’



Damon Wayans Jr., Jake Johnson & Rob Riggle in Chicago  
Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

**Johnson:** When I was in high school, I loved Howard Zinn, because I wanted to realize the world was terrible, and that everyone was a liar. But the older I get, the more I flip it [laughs]. Now I know it’s more complicated, and there are two sides to every story. I think Zinn’s history is correct, but at times I can live too much in that world, and forget to enjoy the good things in life.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Rob, who drinks more off duty ... Officer Franklin from ‘The Hangover’ or Officer Segars from ‘Let’s Be Cops’, and why?

**Riggle:** Officer Franklin for sure. He lives in Vegas, he’s a wild man and he’s using tasers illegally. And he screams while he does it [laughs].

**HollywoodChicago.com:** This is one for all of you - if you were the show business police, which celebrity would you arrest and what would you charge them with?

**Riggle:** I’d arrest Damon and Jake for being too sexy.

**Johnson:** I’d arrest these show business executives. They’re creating a new business model – the good part is that more people have access to more show opportunities, but the bad part is that they’re not giving any development money and calling everything that has potential a ‘presentation.’ It’s exciting because people get to make ‘pilots,’ but if it gets picked up nobody who made the presentation makes any money. The people giving the opportunity for that presentation will make money if the show succeeds, but no one else will.

They are smart and smooth about it, but I would arrest them for ‘dividing the pie so much much that eventually there will be no more pie.’ Cool it, you greedy bastards. In saving money, you’re giving us less quality.

*“Let’s Be Cops” opens everywhere on August 13th. Featuring Damon Wayans Jr., Jake Johnson, Rob Riggle, James D’Arcy, Nina Dobrev, Natasha Leggero and Andy Garcia. Written by Luke Greenfield and Nicholas Thomas. Directed by Luke Greenfield. Rated “R”*



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