

Interview: Dave Franco is Making Magic in ‘Now You See Me 2’

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CHICAGO – Comedy is what makes Dave Franco tick, and recently he’s taken on some prime funny roles in “Neighbors” and “Unfinished Business.” He also was in the very successful “Now You See Me” in 2013, playing a rogue street magician. The sequel was inevitable, and Franco will reprise his role in “Now You See Me 2.”

The sequel reunites the all-star cast, including Mark Ruffalo, Jesse Eisenberg, Woody Harrelson, Morgan Freeman and Michael Caine. Adding to that mix is Daniel “Harry Potter” Radcliffe – portraying a bit of a villain – and Lizzy Caplan, who replaces Isla Fisher from the first film as a female magician. This time the act known as the “Four Horseman” are underground, and it takes a direct challenge to their reputation to get them to emerge again, with China and London among the exotic locations.



It's All in the Cards: Dave Franco in ‘Now You See Me 2’

Photo credit: Summit Entertainment

Dave Franco is back as Jack Wilder in the film, with some new tricks up his sleeve. Dave is part of the actor Franco brothers, joining older brother James in the business. He was born in Palo Alto, California, and graduated from USC. He intended to go into teaching, but was swayed by James’ manager to try acting. Since his debut in “Superbad” (2007), he has steadily climbed the ladder to bigger roles, culminating in the “Neighbors” and “Now You See Me” film series. He also has done a number of comedy video shorts for the “Funny or Die” website, including the infamous “You’re So Hot” series, with comic partner Christopher Mintz-Plasse.

HollywoodChicago.com talked to Dave Franco about his show business path, and his current success in working with the film’s biggest stars.

HollywoodChicago.com: You had the opportunity to work with your cast mates again. What was the greatest story you heard this time around, and who told to you?

Dave Franco: Woody Harrelson is the most fascinating man on earth. If I could trade lives with someone for one day, it's got to be Woody Harrelson. When we were filming in London, he would disappear for the weekend, and would come back with stories like he cut down a tree with Bono, and then they fashioned it into a table. [laughs] That's a slight exaggeration, but not by much.

HollywoodChicago.com: When I saw you on ‘The Tonight Show’ you talked about the commitment of Mark Ruffalo and your admiration in working with the all-star cast. What tips did you pick up from him or them, about acting on film?

Franco: Every male lead actor in this movie has either been nominated or won an Academy Award, except for me. [laughs] I definitely learned a lot from all those guys on the set. Having said that, none of them are the pretentious type, and wouldn't lord anything over anyone. What I learn from observing is that none of them take themselves seriously. which I think is important for an actor.

People who associate ‘serious acting’ with guys like Mark Ruffalo, he's one of the silliest guys I ever met. He knows how to have a good time, as much as the Woody Harrelsons of the world. Being around them, and seeing how loose they are, just makes the job that much more fun.



Dave Franco (left) with Lizzy Caplan, Woody Harrelson and Jesse Eisenberg in ‘Now You See Me 2’

Photo credit: Summit Entertainment

HollywoodChicago.com: The great Michael Caine. How did it feel to have a touch of familiarity with him again, and what's the coolest thing he's ever done for you?

Franco: It's interesting, because the entire cast gets along so well, it's almost a family bond. But I still feel nervous around Michael Caine, he's like the one person who is an icon. Whenever I would approach him, I'd overthink how I want to interact – in my head, it has to be the greatest interaction of all time. Counter to all that, he's such a mellow and cool guy, that I should relax and be myself. He's also a great storyteller, he's happy to talk about past jobs and the people he has worked with in his career.

HollywoodChicago.com: Woody Harrelson played a dual role in this edition of ‘Now You See Me.’ Which performance did you you enjoy more...the part of Merritt or his twin brother Chase, and why?

Franco: Let's go with his lead role as Merritt, because that character is on the same team as me in the story. His twin Chase, we had a hard time with, because of his weird false teeth. Woody of course would do takes where he was really milking it with those teeth, chomping them down and such, and he made Chase kind of a gross character.

HollywoodChicago.com: Are actors interested in the movie histories of their fellow actors? What do you talk about mostly regarding the business, when you talk shop?

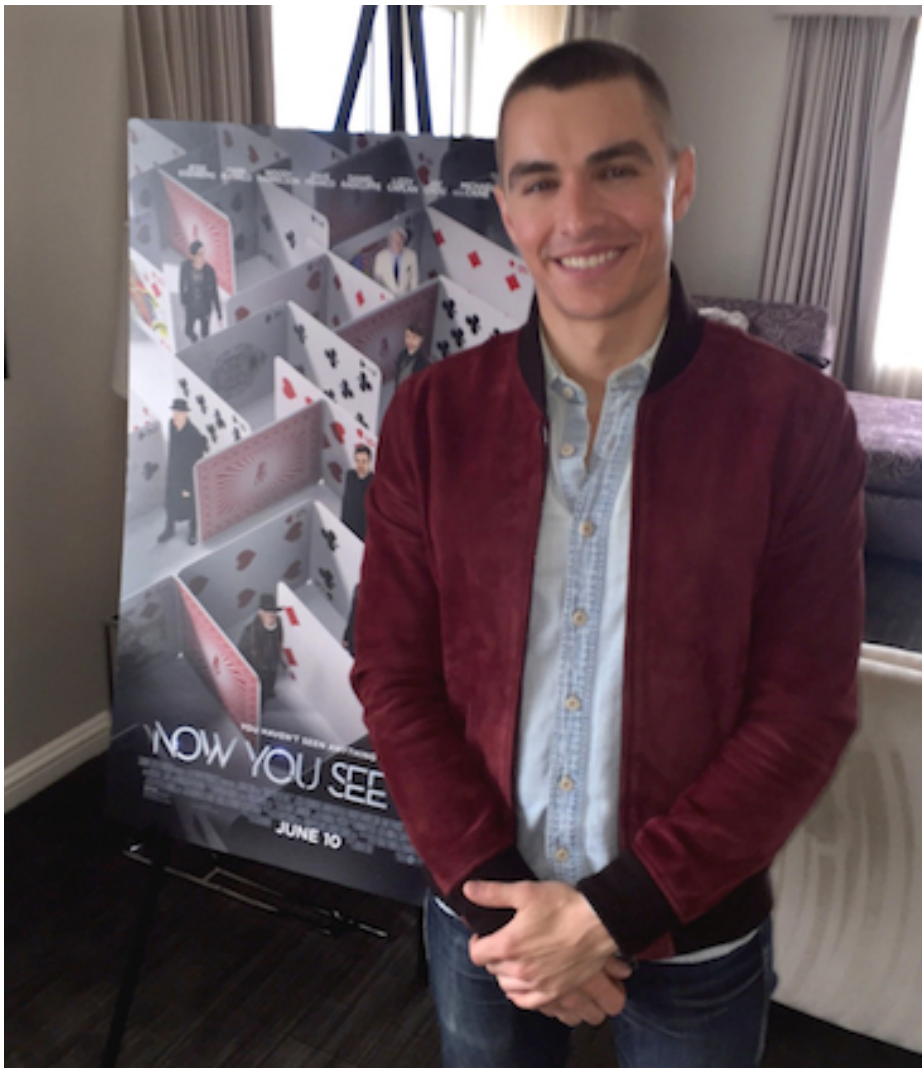
Franco: We definitely don't talk about the craft of acting, or anything like that. [laughs] It is an industry, however, where everyone does talk, and talks about their past jobs, with Ruffalo and Morgan Freeman being particularly good storytellers about the business. It's not about talking shit, it's more about the weird occurrences that happen on sets.

HollywoodChicago.com: You do some pretty outrageous comedy...I’m thinking of the conclusion of the ‘You’re so Hot’ trilogy on FunnyOrDie.com...where do you think that type of comedy was most realized in your big screen roles, and why?

Franco: What I love about those videos is that I’ve developed a relationship with ‘Funny or Die’ over the years, and they really allow me to do whatever I want, with full creative freedom. It’s great, because they’re fully depraved and strange, but that’s what I love about it. I want to push the envelope and bring something to the audience they’ve never seen before.

As far as my film roles, I think I had the longest leash on ‘Neighbors,’ because that is Seth Rogen and [director] Nick Stoller’s style. It’s improvisational, and they encouraged me to bring whatever I wanted to the part. It’s a warm and safe comic environment, where you feel comfortable trying anything. Some of it might not work, but they never make anyone feel bad about trying anything. That mentality gave me the freedom to go to some bizarre places.

HollywoodChicago.com: Since you’re now an official show biz family, what lessons do you think your non-show business father taught you, that has helped you survive, and do you think the lesson was different for your brother James?



Dave Franco in Chicago

Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

Franco: He wasn’t a huge advice giver, but I definitely learned things from him, and I can’t speak for James on that topic. But what I took from him had to do with his past. He was a fine arts painting major when he was in college, but he worked away from the arts in his 40 year job career. But when he had some freedom in the last years of his life, he went back to the painting arts, and I never saw him happier.

What I took from that, is I know how difficult it is to make a career in the arts, but even if you don’t make a career of it, don’t lose it as a hobby. Artists often end up in jobs that have nothing to do with their art. But that side needs to be fulfilled – don’t give it up.

HollywoodChicago.com: You have a quick role in an upcoming film called ‘Zeroville,’ in which you’re going to portray the classic movie star Montgomery Cliff. What was your preparation for that?

Franco: I’m only in one scene, it’s a brief cameo, but it was hugely difficult. I was portraying this iconic actor, and I obviously want to do my homework, figure out his mannerisms, and the cadence in which he talks. So I did all the work, even though the scene was brief, and I may have put too much pressure on myself. [laughs] I haven’t seen the film yet.

HollywoodChicago.com: When was the first time you saw a close-up of yourself on the big screen, and what was your reaction?

Franco: It was for ‘Superbad,’ in my six second role. [laughs] I was still in college, and I hadn’t really told anybody about it. I thought maybe I might get cut from it, and I didn’t know how it would come across. I’m very hard on myself, and I wasn’t sure if I wanted anybody to see it. But then I heard it was great, and my role wasn’t on the cutting room floor, so I went to a screening with a bunch of friends.

HollywoodChicago.com: So it was just a regular movie theater screening?

Franco: Yeah! When I came onto the big screen, all my friends just freaked out. [laughs] I don’t think any of them processed the rest of the film, because they couldn’t believe I was in it – not only on the big screen but as part of a great movie. My reaction was a strange feeling, because I still struggle watching myself, and still am very self critical. At least now, I can accept certain moments as okay. As for those friends, I haven’t impressed them since then. [laughs]

HollywoodChicago.com: This is going to sound like a ridiculous question, especially in the light of the ‘You’re So Hot’ stuff, but a female acquaintance of mine rhapsodized about your looks to a very high degree, after I told her we were going to talk. How do you keep a humility when people are always complimenting you about that, and how do you discern female attention?

Franco: F**k! [laughs] Again, my friends that I grew up with keep me very grounded, and will shit on me any chance they get. Anytime I do a photo shoot or whatever, they will tear me apart. So that’s good. I’ll leave it at that.

“Now You See Me 2” opens everywhere on June 10th. Featuring Dave Franco, Daniel Radcliffe, Michael Caine, Mark Ruffalo, Jesse Eisenberg, Woody Harrelson, Morgan Freeman and Lizzy Caplan. Screenplay by Ed Solomon. Directed by Jon M. Chu. Rated “PG-13” To access Dave Franco on FunnyorDie.com, [click here](#). [18]



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