

SPOTLIGHTS

MOVIES/TV

// [Semi Pro Review](#)

MUSIC

// [Nine Inch Nails](#)

[Releases New Album Via Website](#)

WRESTLING

// [TNA Press Release On Live Impact](#)

POLITICS

// [Super Tuesday II Preview -- Obama vs. Clinton In TX, OH, VT, & RI](#)

MMA

// [UFC Offers Randy Couture A Fight Against Nogueira](#)

SPORTS

// [411's Marquez-Vasquez III Report 03.01.08](#)

GAMES

// [411 Games Fact or Fiction: Grand Theft Auto's 100 Hours of Gameplay, God of War, Commodore 64, the Day Metal Gear Solid 4 Arrives and More](#)

411mania » Movies » Columns

411 Movies Interview: Vincent Pastore

Posted by [Tony Farinella](#) on 03.04.2008

411's [Tony Farinella](#) sits down with [Vincent Pastore](#) for an exclusive interview!

*Vincent Pastore is probably best known for his work on [the Sopranos](#). In fact, even to this day, people still talk about his character, Salvatore "Big Pussy" Bonpensiero. That being said, there's more than meets the eye with Vincent Pastore. If you look closer, you'll see an actor with a lot of range and a lot of personality. In *P.J.*, we get to see a completely different side of Vincent Pastore. He's funny, charming, and likable. In my interview with Vincent Pastore, we talked about the Sopranos, *P.J.*, his career, and a whole lot more.*



TONY: In *P.J.*, we get to see a different side of Vincent Pastore. Was that something that attracted you to the project?

Vincent Pastore: Yeah, that's one of the main reasons why I took the role. That, and I wanted to work with John Heard again.

TONY: In your career, you have worked on big budget films, independent films, and you've also done a lot of television. What's the biggest difference between working on an independent film and a mainstream film?

Vincent Pastore: The money. We don't make any money on a film like *P.J.* We do it because we like the project. And, also, you develop relationships with people like Russell and Howard Nash, and you're able to look at future projects with these guys, and you're also in a position where you could say, "Hey, do me a favor and put my buddy in this scene. Or my girlfriend in this scene." They're very cooperative with something like that, where in the big productions, they won't even give you the time of day for something like that. I've done three independent films this year, and I was able to get a very close friend of mine in all three of the projects, including *P.J.* And what this does is it builds up their resume. So, not only do you gain by working on the projects for your own self, but you're in a position where you could, if they're good enough for the roles, recommend them to the directors. And people like Russell and Howard are very good about that, because they know everybody needs a break.

TONY: What was it like working with first-time director Russ Emanuel?

Vincent Pastore: Russell knew what he was doing. He had a great crew, and he didn't feel, to me, like a first-time director. He knew what he was doing; we had a tight schedule. He didn't waste our time. And he was able to use one set, which we reconstructed; it was an old police station in Brooklyn. And we reconstructed it to make it look like a hospital, so he had everything there, and it wasn't like he had to move his equipment every day. It was more like working on a soap opera, because, one day, we would shoot everything in one room, and then you come back the next day, and we're in another room. It wasn't so hectic where we were moving and breaking down the stuff and moving it all around. It wasn't set up like that; it was very professional.

TONY: What was it like working with John Heard? He seems like a lot of fun.


Vincent Pastore: Well, John is probably one of the better, underrated actors in this business. I met John years ago working on *Awakenings*, and I also know John because he was involved with the West Bank Cafe on 42nd street. And he didn't approach it as if it was a low-budget project ... he approached it as if it was no different than *Awakenings* or *Home Alone*, and he delivered. And everybody on the set liked him. He makes the movie. The movie's about Howard's character, but it's also about what Heard's character goes through. And, me, I come in, and I kind of become like the guy's buddy. I've always liked playing a Borgnine-type right hand man who comes in, and I bring a comic relief to it, which is good. So, we had very good chemistry, John and I.

TONY: How do you feel about the film as a finished product?

Vincent Pastore: Well, I'm amazed, because when you work on something and you know the script backwards and forwards, you could go and watch a screening of it and you could be totally bored because you know what's gonna happen, but I was totally amazed, especially with the cinematography. It's a bright movie; it's not a dark movie. They captured something about the exteriors of Brooklyn and the New York skyline, which brought a joy into the film, and it didn't bring it down. I was thinking it was gonna be a dark film, but it was the total opposite. So, the movie, because of the cinematography, makes you think about hope and rebirth, which happens at the end.



Advertisement



**Business
Chat
Rooms**

**Attend
or
Host
for
FREE !**

■ MOVIE REVIEWS

// [Semi Pro Review \[2\]](#)

// [Semi-Pro Review](#)

// [The Other Boleyn Girl
Review](#)

// [Penelope Review](#)

// [George A. Romero's
Diary of the Dead Review](#)

// [Vantage Point Review
\[2\]](#)

■ HOT MOVIES

// [Sin City 2](#)

// [Indiana Jones IV](#)

// [The Dark Knight](#)

// [Terminator 4](#)

// [Star Trek Prequel](#)

■ SYNDICATE

[RSS](#)

[411mania RSS Feeds](#)



TONY: Have you ever thought about directing your own film?

Vincent Pastore: I direct plays; I haven't directed a film yet. I get involved with the production end sometimes, like raising capital. But as for what I like to do now with my life, I like to find plays that I'm interested in and put 'em up, because it's a small budget. You get a play up for showcase at twenty-thousand dollars, and it's an immediate response. I haven't thought about producing or directing too many films, but I've been involved with a lot of theater. My next project is gonna be next fall, and it's a revival of a Louis LaRusso play called *Lamppost Reunion*, and it's me and my dear friend, and we get together and it's like an independent film because we say, "Okay, we gotta commit a month of our lives and our time to this project. Rehearsals and then the performance." And I just did a Broadway play, where you make good money and it's a whole different gig, so to go back and do a showcase, maybe some people think it's a step backwards, but it's not, because what happens after you do Broadway and then when you go back and do a showcase, you take everything you learn from a Broadway play and you put it and showcase it. It's like almost a comparison to me and John working on *P.J.*, because we took what we learned from working on bigger projects, and you put it into that, so I'm sure we were able to help Russell's process go by a lot faster.

TONY: Does it ever bother you when people typecast you?

Vincent Pastore: Well, I don't think I've been typecast; I think what happened is that the movies that I made that had a gangster or mafia genre kind of surfaced more than the other stuff. I'm really, really hoping that *P.J.* takes off and becomes part of the Independent Spirits next year, because then people can see the other work I've been doing. Like I said, I just did Broadway; I did *Chicago* and played Amos Hart, which is the total opposite of playing a gangster. So, I do play other roles, but with *The Sopranos* and *Gotti* and *Men of Respect*, and my wise guy stuff, people remember me more from that, because they see those projects more than they see the other projects.

TONY: Even to this day, people are still talking about the ending of *The Sopranos*. Personally, how did you feel about the ending?

Vincent Pastore: Well, actually, we just did a spoof on that ending on *The Apprentice*, if you saw that. And I think it was like David was going like he just pulled the plug on the television, and I thought it was genius, because people were saying, "What happened to my television? What happened to *The Sopranos*?" I mean, when you have this big enterprise in front of you called *The Sopranos*, why ever let it end? It's like saying no more *Star Trek's* or no more *Indiana Jones* or no more *Rocky's*. So, they made so much money on it, and for them to end it as a TV show and say, "OK, Tony's dead. Silvio's dead. And Carmela left him," you don't do that. You pull the plug, and you say, "OK, let the public want to see something else again." Which was probably gonna be a movie. I mean, I think everything is being based on the success of *Sex and the City*, which is coming out in May as a movie, and if HBO cleans up on that, you know they're gonna throw money into a movie version, a *Godfather*-type version of *The Sopranos* with maybe Tony Soprano having flashbacks, and then you see some of the earlier characters, which were really rich in the first couple of years, their relationship with him and the old man and everything like that. So I don't think it's over. Every time I run into David Chase and every time I run into Jimmy and all those guys, nobody talks about it being over.

TONY: What kind of impact do you think Italians have had on American cinema?

Vincent Pastore: Well, first of all, prior to Pacino and De Niro breaking through, you had Kirk Douglas playing a mafia guy, Humphrey Bogart playing a mafia guy, who were non-Italian Americans. There was so much slack going around about, "Well, you got the Italians playing gangsters and making everybody look bad." Well, that's a percentage of society. That's like saying, "OK, we're not gonna cast any black, African Americans as drug dealers, or we're not gonna cast any people from the Mid East as terrorists." I mean, we just know that that's what they do, but they don't do it 100 percent. You have the Barack Obama's, the great politicians, the Martin Luther King's, and then you have your criminals in the black society. Same thing as the Italian society. People aren't interested in the history of these Italian Americans who did something to benefit the American society; they're interested in the wise guy stuff. And the Italians should be able to play these roles. I mean, I was talking to Jason Cerbone last night, who was on *The Sopranos* with me, and I said, we were having dinner with some people last night, and I said, "You know, the problem is that David Chase and Georgianne Walken discovered so many Italian American actors over the past six or seven years on *The Sopranos* the problem is they're all out of work now." And, now, Hollywood has a great place to pick from. Instead of saying, "OK, who we gonna get to play a Don? And maybe they had three choices; now they got twenty choices. So what it did do, it opened the door for Italian Americans to find work. I didn't get into the business until I was 42; there's more guys at the age of 42 saying, "I think I wanna be an actor now. I think I'm gonna retire from the police department and become an actor." That didn't happen years ago, and because of *The Sopranos*, more Italian Americans are thinking about getting into the entertainment business.

TONY: Because you entered the Hollywood game later in life, does that change your perspective at all in terms of celebrity?

Vincent Pastore: What I think happened to me ... it's like somebody gave me a second chance, and I wind up being in a great position in my life now, and when I watch an interview the other night with Harrison Ford by Barbara Walters, and she says, "Do you ever think you're gonna be accepted as a great actor? Do you ever think you're gonna get an Academy Award?" He says, "I do what I do." And he does it well. It's the same with Stallone. These guys do what they do, and they got a great life. Will Harrison Ford ever get an Academy Award? Will Stallone ever get an Academy Award as an actor? Will Vinny Pastore ever get an Academy Award? I don't know. It depends what script comes along. It's really not in our control; it's in the control of the people who offer us the jobs. I got about ten scripts sitting on my kitchen table, and I go through them, and there's not one script that I have that I know is gonna be like a *Marty* or a great role for me. So, it's really up to somebody to send me one. One of the things I loved about working on *P.J.* is if that movie does take off as independent hit, people are gonna see my work as the orderly and say, "He carried this movie with John Heard." If you didn't have a scene with John and Howard Nash, they cut to Vinny. What happens is when people put movies together, they look for that third character, and they look for the guys that are gonna be the supporting cast and who's gonna back up the main guys. I just saw a movie, *Fool's Gold* with Matthew McConaughey, and I was totally disappointed, because his supporting cast failed. They failed; they didn't bring that movie up to a higher level. And the whole movie was Kate Hudson and Matthew McConaughey, and then you get tired, because when you cut to a supporting cast, if they don't deliver, the movie falls apart. Unlike *No Country For Old Men*. In *No Country for Old Men*, it wasn't just about Tommy Lee Jones ... it was about that whole cast. And then all of a sudden, you cut to a scene, and you got Woody Harrelson doing a great scene. And that's what makes great movie making; that's what happens in *Crash* and all great ensemble pieces, and that's why people like to work together with good actors.



TONY: What do you think is the biggest misconception about you?

Vincent Pastore: That I'm a tough guy. But I can be a tough guy.

TONY: Finally, what was it like watching the Giants win the Super Bowl?

Vincent Pastore: Well, I have to say that I'm one of the those guys that didn't think it was gonna happen, and up until the second quarter, I was rooting, in a sense, for the Patriots, not really rooting, but I said, "They're gonna take this away; they were 18-0." And then when the Giants came around, it was unbelievable. And then last week, I did a commercial, actually a pilot with Toomer of the Giants, and I hung out with him all day, and I said, "What's it like? How is it different?" And he said, "Man, I've been playing football with the Giants for 12 years; now we won the Super Bowl. It's like you getting an Academy Award. It's like we're getting more attention. We're still the same guys, but we're getting all this attention now." So, what's it like to see the Giants win, it's like, "Okay, now everybody's a Giants fan again." If they would have lost, I wanted to see if the energy would have still been there next year.

[Post Comment \(1\)](#) | [Email Tony Farinella](#) | [View Tony Farinella's 411 Profile](#)

[Send To Friend](#) | [Stumble It!](#) | [Digg It!](#) | [BOOKMARK](#)

[--- More Articles by Tony Farinella ---](#)

[--- More On 411 Movie Interviews ---](#)

Comments (1)

Great interview, you always have great questions and get to the heart of your subject.

Posted By: **Marc Wasserman (Guest)** on March 04, 2008 at 01:06 AM

