

Anthony Mackie: The ‘Pain & Gain’ Interview

Kam Williams
Special To *The Skanner News*
Born in New Orleans on September 23, 1979, Anthony Mackie attended the Julliard School of Drama. He was discovered after receiving rave reviews for playing Tupac Shakur in the off-Broadway play “Up Against the Wind.” Immediately following, Mackie made an auspicious film debut as Eminem’s nemesis, Papa Doc, in Curtis Hanson’s “8 Mile.” His performance caught the attention of Spike Lee, who subsequently cast him in “Sucker Free City” and “She Hate Me.” He also appeared in Clint Eastwood’s “Million Dollar

Baby” as well as in Jonathan Demme’s “The Manchurian Candidate.” Mackie had five features on movie screens in 2006. In addition to “We Are Marshall,” he starred in “Half Nelson,” with Ryan Gosling, adapted from director Ryan Fleck’s Sundance-winning short “Gowanus Brooklyn;” in Preston Whitmore’s “Crossover;” in Frank E. Flowers ensemble crime drama “Haven,” opposite Orlando Bloom and Bill Paxton; and in the film adaptation of Richard Price’s “Freedomland,” starring Samuel L. Jackson. Besides an impressive film career, the gap-toothed thespian has performed both on and off Broadway, making his Broadway debut as the stuttering nephew, Sylvester, alongside Whoopi Goldberg in August Wilson’s “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom.” Next he was seen as the lead in Regina King’s modern retelling of Chekov’s “The Seagull,” in Stephen Belber’s “McReele,” and in the Pulitzer Prize-winning “A Soldier’s Play.” More recently, Mackie participated in the Kennedy Center’s presentation of “August Wilson’s 20th Century.” As one of more than 30 renowned stars of stage and screen, he performed in three readings of Wilson’s cycle of ten plays chronicling the African-American



Pain & Gain

experience, each set in a different decade of the 20th century. A true aficionado of live theatre, he hopes to return to the stage soon. In 2009, he played Sgt. JT Sanborn on the big screen in Kathryn Bigelow’s “The Hurt Locker,” a film which won the Academy Award for Best Picture. That same year, he reprised his role as Tupac Shakur in “Notorious,” the biopic of Notorious B.I.G. In 2010, he took a break from film to return to Broadway where he starred in “A Beheading in Spokane.” He subsequently returned to Hollywood to appear opposite Kerry Washington in “Night

Night Catches Us, etcetera, etcetera...

AM: Thanks a lot, Kam. I’ve been very fortunate to land all the projects that I’ve done. I have a great team of people working with me.

KW: So, what interested you in “Pain & Gain?”

AM: It was the script. I was really psyched about Michael [director Michael Bay] doing a story with three-dimensional characters like these who you could real delve into to see what makes them tick.

KW: I have a lot of questions sent in to you by readers. Editor/Legist Patricia Turner asks: How

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Catches Us.” Then he appeared in “The Adjustment Bureau” and “Real Steel.” Last year, he made several movies, including “Man on a Ledge,” “10 Years” and “Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter.” 2013 is proving very productive for Mackie, with the horror thriller “Vipaka,” the coming of age drama “The Inevitable Defeat of Mister and Pete,” the crime thriller “Runner, Runner” and “Bolden” being among his offerings. Here, he talks about his new movie, “Pain & Gain,” a fact-based crime comedy co-starring Dwayne Johnson and Mark Wahlberg.

would you describe your character, Adrian? Are you anything like him in real life?

Kam Williams: Hi Anthony, thanks for another interview.

Anthony Mackie: What’s going on, my man?

KW: Nothing much, brother. What an impressive resume you’ve compiled for someone so young: The Hurt Locker, The Manchurian Candidate, Notorious, We Are Marshall, Half Nelson, 8 Mile, American Violet, The Adjustment Bureau, Gangster Squad,

AM: [Chuckles] That’s funny! No, I’m not anything like him at all. The thing that I enjoyed about doing Adrian was that he never backed down. He admired Daniel [played by Mark Wahlberg] so much and just wanted his friend to succeed. And he also wanted to achieve The American Dream.

KW: I saw you on several talk shows over the last couple of weeks, and between being pumped up from the weightlifting and the way you trash-talked like you were shot out of a cannon, you seemed almost like a different person, or as if you were still in character.

AM: [LOL] I really enjoyed this character and talking about him. I’m lucky because I get to do projects I like and believe in. And it’s exciting to see people react positively to your work, to something you’ve invested so much time and so much of yourself into.

KW: How much time did

See MACKIE on page 10

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