

A: It's not that I took a break...I dedicated myself to a vision of starting a theater company in London. I am in my 8th year living in London, and we are in our 7th season. I have a little more than four years to go. My focus had to shift away from my own career and ambitions; I didn't want to chase the same dream for another ten years. My hope is to continue to do film, though. I love film.

**Q: Have you considered turning some of your favorite theatrical productions into feature films?**

A: There's no doubt that some of the greatest films ever made have come from the theater. It's all a matter of finding a way to make the theater experience watchable on film. At the same time, as much as I'd like people to see more theater, I don't want them to discover theater on film. I want them to come to the theater, sit in a seat, and experience it firsthand.

**Q: Which medium do you find more rewarding as an actor?**

A: Theater. The process of doing a play is an organic one, and the process of doing a film is totally inorganic. As an actor, when you do a play, you show up every day with a whole company of actors and crew, and you work on it for six weeks or so. You become a family. Then you share it with an audience.

**Q: How does that compare with a film performance?**

A: In film, shooting schedules are based on three things: actor availability, when are sets being built, and when can you rent the location for filming. If I am doing four or five scenes with Jeff Bridges in a film, but he's doing another movie, I will start working on that movie, and a few weeks later Jeff will come in for 7 days, and we'll work for 7 days, then he goes away and works on another movie. I don't see him again.

**Q: So does that make film more challenging?**

A: You never really play the whole performance...just pieces of it. The film experience is

inorganic...it is little strips of film that the director and editor put together. Every day you have new people and new locations. Rarely do you have an entire company come together. In theater, that's the actor's medium...so it's a much more satisfying place for me.

**Q: For *Casino Jack*, you actually met up with Jack Abramoff in prison to talk about the character. What was that like? Was he secretive or open with you?**

A: I can't talk much about it. It was a private, and I felt grateful he was willing to meet with me. It was very helpful. Meeting the person you are going to be playing is very unique. I was more interested in the emotional terrain of what he was going through at the time than what he actually did. He was very open and up front. I met his whole team of lobbyists and lawyers in DC. I met people who loved him...people who hated him...and people who didn't think he got as many years in prison as he should have. Then I tried to humanize him in my performance...after the media had largely dehumanized him.

**Q: Where is Jack now? We heard a few weeks ago he was free and working at a Baltimore pizza parlor making a little over minimum wage.**

A: Yes...I believe it was a kosher pizza parlor. Now he's free...completely free. His son's came to the American Film Institute's premiere in L.A. I know his family--as difficult as it is to watch some aspects of the film--feels it is fair. We didn't set out to make Jack Abramoff out to be a one-dimensional villain...but a person.

**Q: Has working on the film influenced your feelings on politics in Washington?**

A: I am revolted by Washington and the hypocrisy of the senate hearings. There were a number of senators who had taken money from Abramoff...and McCain had taken money from competing Indian casinos for the same reasons that they were there pointing fingers at Abramoff. As long as we, in the United States, continue to insist that our politicians have to spend all of their time raising millions of dollars for television ads, it will be corrupt. If we leave it up to the politicians to clean up lobbying and finance reform...nothing is going to change.

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