

Alza raps with 50 Cent in new film

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director dropped his pen during my performance. He said I was perfect and that I could have the part under one condition: That I cut my hair, which was long and silky at the time.

DC: Was it hard to let go of those long locks?

WA: No, but I was really sad. I liked my hair. The good thing is that it got me working. For 16 months I was consistently working – being cast in different parts.

DC: What was it like to work with director Jim Sheridan?

WA: Jim Sheridan is a genius. He is one of the best in the world. He is very peculiar and eccentric. I'm not just saying this because I just worked with him, but because he really is awesome. It was one of my best experiences to watch a man like him tell a story the way he does. I wish I could do the whole thing over again. It was such a wonderful experience.

DC: What did Sheridan teach you that you didn't know before in the film industry?

WA: Well picture this. It's 20 degrees below zero in the middle of the street during one of our shootings. In the scene, I'm screaming 'papa,' and the director asks, 'You're thinking about your father when you scream, right?' I said, 'yes.' He then tells me, 'Next time

you scream, think of Jesus Christ.' Terrance Howard ("Hustle & Flow") was standing next to me and we both looked at each other and wondered what he meant by that. But then when we shot that scene again, I did what he told me and it worked even better than the first time. You really have to be alert and willing to improvise with someone like Sheridan.

I was lucky because I love to improvise.

DC :

This film is loosely based on Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson's life. Were you excited to meet him?

WA: I was

scared to meet him because of his reputation. I had actually looked him up on the Internet and there was so much stuff about him that it made me afraid. But then when I met him, I learned that he is actually a really generous guy. He's very nice and sincere.

DC: You have dabbled in all formats of acting. Which do you prefer – films, television or theatre?

WA: Well, I enjoy them all, but if I had to choose between them, it would be theatre. The problem is that you don't make a lot of money. Television and film have changed so much throughout the years. They move in a faster speed than theater, but as long as you understand the form, it makes it easier. I've shot things like 30 pages a day. You have to be technically fit in order to deal with film and television. I teach acting as well and I try to inform my students about the technical side because acting is so in the moment that you just do it.

DC: Does teaching the art of acting help you with your own career?

WA: It helps me to reflect on acting. That's why I'm planning to open an acting school in Canada for underprivileged children, but of course it requires funding.

Additional reporting by Kiko Martinez

