

50 Cent: Robert De Niro makes me feel 'normal'

NEW YORK (AP) — It's not every day that you see Robert De Niro on the cover of *Vibe* magazine — with 50 Cent. They posed for the March issue to promote their new crime drama, "Righteous Kill," co-starring Al Pacino and Brian Dennehy. The movie is expected to be released this fall.

Rapper 50 Cent, whose real name is Curtis Jackson, says he'd "hang out with Robert on Thursdays and Fridays" if he could. "His celebrity is so strong that I get a chance to feel like a normal person for a little bit," the 31-year-old rapper tells *Vibe*.

"People get nervous around him. We had a table read, and it was amazing because there were people who came in who were like, all recognizable faces ...and Robert comes in and Al comes in and it's almost like, their knees are going shaky under the table. It's great."

Rapper-turned-actor 50, who has sold millions of records, launched his film career with the autobiographical tale "Get Rich or Die Tryin'" in 2005.

De Niro won an Oscar for portraying a mob boss in "The Godfather: Part II." His screen credits also include

"Goodfellas" and "Heat." The 64-year-old actor says he doesn't mind being famous for playing gangsters.

"Those characters are more exciting," he said. "People like to watch and identify with them in some ways. It's a fantasy. The other side is, for an actor, [those parts are] more fun, in a way, to do."

Is 50 that cold-blooded? "Yeah," says the rapper, who's famously been shot nine times.

When asked the same question, De Niro responds: "No, I don't know. I'm actually ...more sensitive."

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the next week. So, I was able to relax, enjoy myself, and live in the moment.

KW: *In the movie, your character has an accent since her family is from Jamaica. Do you really have a West Indian background?*

RW: No I don't. I had to work on the accent with a dialect coach. Raya, remember, went to a prep school, so her dialect had to be a bit more proper than her parents. But when she came back home, we threw a little more of her roots back in there to make her a little more tangible, and to contrast how she is at home versus how she is at school, because that really happens.

KW: *Do you think Halle Berry's Oscar win opened up roles for all Black actresses, or just for lighter-skinned actresses?*

RW: I think Halle opened the door for all of us. As Black women, we should all stick together, and if someone gets there first, you're setting an example for those behind you. So, I definitely look up to Halle Berry. And Angela Bassett is my role model. And Viola Davis is another actress who I love and adore.

For me, I've gotten away from feeling I'm too dark. We're all women of color, and a lot of us are doing some great things. I think it's important the great things that we all do instead of asking, "Why didn't I get this?" or "Why did the light-skinned girl get that?" instead of focusing on the positive. That's what I and some girlfriends of mine are doing, celebrating all colors and all ethnicities of women of color. That's a better way to go, rather than bringing all

the negativities into it. It so much easier to smile and have fun than it is to hold grudges.

KW: *I hope that your powerful performance here will open things up further in terms of colorblind casting.*

RW: Thank you very much. The reason I trained so hard in school was so that I could be versatile and play any character. With all these in my bag, I'm like a chameleon. I always tell other young actors to go to school, or at least watch movies to learn as much as you can.

KW: *Do you think you will still be able to go to the mall after this movie opens?*

RW: My grandmother thinks I won't be able to but, of course, I will. I don't know what it will be like, but it's exciting.

KW: *What message do you want the audience to get from "How She Move?"*

RW: I would like for the young generation to walk away from this movie inspired about their lives and about the possibilities that are out there for them.

KW: *What's up next for you, career-wise?*

RW: I have an upcoming HBO television series starring Anna Paquin called "True Blood."

KW: *You're very intelligent. Do you think you'll write and direct someday?*

RW: I've thought about producing, maybe way, way, way down the line... I'd love to have a production company where I can produce more Black films, period pieces, for instance, like Shakespeare, with an all-Black cast. There are lots of ideas that I have, but all in due time.

Missy asks fans to name album

NEW YORK - Missy Elliot is giving her fans the opportunity to name her upcoming album.

Listeners can offer their suggestions at the rapper/producer's website, www.missy-elliott.com, until the contest closes on February 20. The winner, who will be announced on March 2, will receive credit on the album — due in late spring 2008 via Goldmind/Atlantic — and a \$500 "Respect Me" Adidas gift card.

Elliot has already released two tracks from

her forthcoming seventh album, "Ching-A-Ling" and "Shake Your Pom Pom," both of which appear on the "Step Up 2 The Streets" soundtrack, which hit stores this week. That album is the musical companion to the upcoming Touchstone Pictures dance film of the same name, which opens on Valentine's Day.

Elliot has teamed up with director Dave Meyers and the Walt Disney Company's Touchstone Pictures to create a 3D music video for "Ching-A-Ling." The video premiered on MTV's TRL this week.



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