

Weather Partly cloudy 43° F | Traffic

In partnership with ajc.com & wsbtv.com |[Make us your home page](#)

Events Venues Movies Restaurants Performers

What are you looking for? Where is it? Search

When is it? City & State or ZIP Tonight, ... 5th...

Home Celebrities & TV Ameri Events All Access Food & Restaurants B Movies Current Movies Music Atlanta Music Sce

Fashion & Style Fashid Games & Comics Com Holiday Guide Entertain Add a Listing

Give your new pet the *best.*
Save on the Publix pet aisle.

Click here for limited-time COUPONS

Publix

Atlanta Arts and Culture (<http://blogs.ajc.com/arts-culture>)

Q&A with actor-director Mark Ruffalo

1:57 pm February 18, 2010, by Sandi



Left to right: Mark Ruffalo and Leonardo DiCaprio in SHUTTER ISLAND.

By Gina Piccalo

Mark Ruffalo is having a good year already. The actor, best known for his roles in 2000's Academy Award-nominated "You Can Count on Me" and Michel Gondry's "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," was the toast of this year's Sundance Film Festival. His long-gestating directorial debut, "Sympathy for Delicious," a drama about a paraplegic who seeks faith healing (played by his best friend, paraplegic Christopher Thornton) earned a special jury prize. And his performance in Lisa Cholodenko's indie drama "The Kids Are All Right" as the birth father to the children of a lesbian couple (played by Julianne Moore and Annette Bening) was touted as one of his best.

This month, he co-stars with Leonardo DiCaprio in Martin Scorsese's psychological genre thriller "Shutter Island," Scorsese's first film since winning an Oscar for "The Departed." It's a bittersweet moment for the 42-year-old actor after surviving two devastating life events in the past eight years: the removal of a brain tumor in 2002 that left his face partially paralyzed (though he recovered) and the mysterious 2008 shooting death of his brother. As he sat nestled next to his 2-year-old daughter in their upstate New York home, Ruffalo talked by phone about what he learned from Scorsese and the reasons he left Hollywood.

Q: Was working with Scorsese what you expected?

A: He was the sweetest. So gentle and funny and easygoing. He was also a master. It's a rare thing in America to see a master at work at his age. We turn people out so quickly here. It's so hard for people to become masters of anything. He's at a point in his life, he doesn't have anything to prove to anybody. He doesn't have to win anything. He doesn't have to worry about money. He simply does it for the pure pleasure of it. That's a rare freedom. A master is someone who's able to do the art without thinking about it any longer. He knows the language of filmmaking so well. ... There's a lot of grace around watching someone do that.

Q: You've been working on your own film, "Sympathy for Delicious," for a decade or more.

What was the most surprising thing you learned about yourself as a director?

A: I learned how naive I was to think we were just going to make a movie and put our friends in it. The real world really did come crashing down around us. It was really frustrating. People didn't want to see a paraplegic as the lead in a movie. They were willing to make the movie if I was willing to put an able-bodied A-list actor in it.

Q: You've really had a tumultuous decade between your own health troubles and your brother's

tragic and unsolved death, along with the births of your three children. How are you changed as a result?

A: These things aren't specific to just me. Life is hard for people. You go through those things, and what's important becomes clear to you. It's also frustrating. My brother's tragedy is unsolved. It goes on and on. But things become very clear. I left Hollywood. I've taken a long break from acting. I've really simplified my life and gathered around my family. It's still a loss — you carry that around. It becomes ingrained in you, and no one can escape it. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy. You try to find a way to integrate into your life. I try to put it in my work. That's my sort of refuge from all of this. And my family.

accessAtlanta Partner Sites



[Add an Event »](#)

[Add a Venue »](#)

[Add a Performer »](#)

[Contact Us »](#)

[Customer Care »](#)

Looking for more? ▲ **Sections**

- [Home](#)
- [Celebrities & TV](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Food & Restaurants](#)
- [Movies](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Fashion & Style](#)
- [Games & Comics](#)
- [Holiday Guide](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Topics](#)

[Advertise on accessAtlanta.com »](#)

Reach the audience you want by advertising on accessAtlanta.com

[Join the Access Atlanta Network »](#)

Advertisers and Publishers, expand your reach by joining the Access Atlanta Network.

Tell us what you think about the site

Send us your suggestions about this page.

Send a



[Visitor Agreement](#) | [Privacy Statement](#) | [About our ads](#)

© 2010 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Search accessAtlanta.com...