



Shamontiel Vaughn
Chicago News & Events Examiner

Alex Meraz, Paul from 'Twilight' series visits Chicago for The Official Twilight Convention

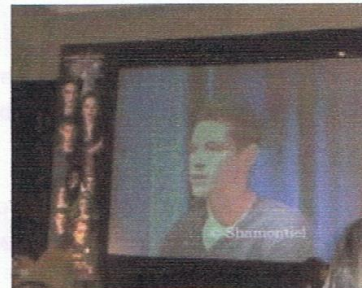
Recommend

September 10th, 2010 9:43 pm CT

Like loyal sports fans on the Addison and 35th St. Red Line stops during baseball season, you knew where these CTA riders were going without asking.

Stepping off of the Blue Line at Rosemont, T-shirts with "New Moon" designs, jackets with "Team Edward" and bags with Bella, Jacob and Edward were everywhere on the platform while young ladies and grown women made their way to the Westin O'Hare located at 6100 River Road for [The Official Twilight Convention in Chicago](#) on Fri., Sept. 10.

Some girls looked suspiciously young and were probably playing hooky from school, but Twi-Moms outnumbered them anyway. From elementary school age to gray hair age, the Grand Ballroom theater was packed with "Twilight" fans when Alex Meraz sat onstage for a Q&A session at 12:45 p.m. Although Meraz plays the temperamental werewolf Paul from the Quilete tribe, the actor behind the werewolf received a warm welcome and cracked several jokes while talking to the crowd.



Alex Meraz sits centerstage answering questions from the crowd.
Photo: Shamontiel L. Vaughn

Hobbies outside of acting: "I used to sell art at street fairs back in the day. There is a lot of Native American influence in my work. But I'll paint anything, even butterflies. I'm not homophobic."

If you were a cookie, what kind would you be: "I'd be an Oreo. It's all about the filling. Take that how you will."

Preparing for the role in the Quilete tribe: "While preparing for the role I wanted to represent the tribe in a good way. I wasn't worried about being sexy. I wanted to respect the tribe. The movie made me appreciate people from different cultures, all walks of life." (Additional Note: Meraz is part of the Purépecha Indian tribe, also known as Tarascans.)

Role he'd play if he wasn't Paul: "I'd be Laurent. He was kind of creepy but cool, and he had those dreads."

Eating the muffins: "Those muffins were not good, and they had a lot of starch in them. But I didn't have to eat them. When I came into the scene, I only had to put the muffin to my mouth, and the director said "Cut." I'd have been mad if I had to eat those things. Bronson was on the verge of vomiting from the muffins. I kept

coaxing him on."

Food that relates to his role: "I don't know. Baby back ribs? Baby got back ribs?"

Best physical part about being Paul: "I don't know. To talk about him physically is like talking about myself. My painted on abs?" (Audience member yells out "Prove they're spray painted!")

His reaction to commercials from cast members: "I saw a commercial in a hotel where Jackson (Rathbone) was doing the ProActive commercial. Great acting showing his invisible pimple. I thought it was pretty funny."

Charities he supports: "Actually I do support a charity, DefendersofWildLife.org. They help protect endangered species."

Taylor Lautner in the nude: "I'll try to keep this PG-13. Taylor had to wear this man thong, but he's a trooper. It was freezing, and he'd be over in the corner curled up. But he stayed on set the whole time. We'd put these heat packets in our pockets. I think he got through the scene..." (Meraz motions like he's putting a heat packet in his crotch area, and the audience bursts out laughing.)

Bloopers while filming: "I kept messing up one line I had in a scene because I was staring at Peter's (Facinelli) wig. As soon as they'd get to my line, I'd go "Huh? What?" I kept dropping the f-bomb missing my line."

Best actor to work with: "I don't have a favorite. They're all great. Rob is getting more comfortable. Taylor is the most relaxed person ever. I don't remember Taylor ever missing his lines except once. He held his forehead and then he remembered them."

Being a father: "My son is two and a half years old. His name means "Beautiful One." We play this game where we diss each other. His ultimate insult right now is Poo Poo Planet."

Rivalry between "Twilight" and "Harry Potter": "I didn't know there was a real rivalry. I just thought of them as being two different things. The same fans may watch both. I'm just an actor. I can appreciate what they do, but it's two different things. Now 'Vampire Diaries'..." (Audience laughs when Meraz folds his arms and makes a face.)

Spending time in Chicago: "I never get to hang out. Whenever I'm here, I'm in and out and haven't had time to explore it."

Possible cast member on "Dancing with the Stars": "Whoa, that got out, didn't it? For those that don't know, 'Dancing with the Stars' was interested in me being on one of the seasons. I was flattered. I was a professional dancer before I was an actor. Ballroom dancing is tough though. I'm kind of bowlegged. Time wouldn't permit me to be on the show though."

Wildest or most embarrassing comment from a fan: "I don't get embarrassed by them, but I just laugh. It looks like I'm embarrassed, but it's just me laughing. The sexual ones always make me laugh. I was in Atlantic City with Chaske (Spencer). Snoop Dogg was there, too. I'd just seen a guy get knocked out in a pizza costume, and I was trying not to laugh but laughing. Then, this girl waved me over. So I walk over to her and I'm assuming she wants to take a photo. So I'm looking around for a camera with my arm around her. Then she goes "Do you know why I like the Wolfpack?" I go "No." She says, "Because I like it doggystyle." I didn't

think anything could've topped the pizza guy getting knocked out, but that did.

Word of advice from his wife on staying grounded: "She hasn't given me any advice on staying grounded, but my wife has been the biggest support. When the movie came out, she was all about Rob. Team Edward. If I didn't get the role, I knew she'd still see the films."

Favorite music: "I like a lot of different music. I just bought Bruno Mars."

Dream role: "I'd love to do a role that incorporates Asian martial arts and action. Martial arts is in my background. But I'm not Japanese so that might be a problem."

After the Q&A session was complete, he signed the banners hanging from the monitors and joined Peter Facinelli (Dr. Carlisle Cullen) for a private meet and greet session with ten "Twilight" fans. At 5 p.m., fans had the opportunity to pay for photo ops with the two cast members with the "Vampire vs. Wolves" theme.

It's not too late to come to the Official Twilight Convention in Chicago. [Click here for details.](#)

Check [Shamontiel's Chicago News & Events Examiner](#) for the interview with Peter Facinelli and [Chicago Fragrance Examiner](#) for the [Applicious Shimmering Hand and Body Lotion](#) review. Coming soon.

Check out more "Twilight" content below:

1. "[Movie Review of 'The Twilight Saga: Eclipse,' Are You Team Jacob or Team Edward?](#)"
2. "[Scavenger hunt for Twilight perfume in Chicago supports copycat Nina perfume bottle controversy](#)"
3. "[Ten Reasons Why Jacob is Better Than Edward in 'Twilight' Series](#)"
4. "['The Twilight Saga: Eclipse' back in theaters. Twilight convention in Rosemont](#)"
5. "['The Twilight Saga: Eclipse' Re-releases on Sept. 10 in Honor of Bella's Birthday](#)"
6. "['Twilight' Movie Star Taylor Lautner Labeled 'diva' After \\$300,000 Trailer Confusion Leads to Suing McMahon's RV](#)"
7. "['Why 'Breaking Dawn' Would've Been Better Had it Been Written like 'Midnight Sun'](#)"

Visit [Shamontiel's Other Publications](#) to check out more entertainment interviews.

Slideshow: Alex Meraz at The Official Twilight Convention in Chicago

