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You play an aviator, but you're actually afraid of flying?

Yeah, I don't really like flying.

Didn't you have an accident with a parachute once?

A long time ago. I almost died because my chute didn't open.

Did you see your life flash before your eyes?

Yeah, it was just like the cliché.

In my case, I saw 8x10 glossy photos of me as a child!

[laughs] I didn't realise I had a second chute, which opened just in time. Some of my friends still do it, but I swear I'll never do that kind of crap again!

Is it because you're 30 now, and more sensible?

I'd probably still rather be 20, to tell you the truth. I don't really want to be 30.

Do you think you've changed much over the past 10 years?

In some ways, yeah. Although I'm now 30 and an adult, I'm still very juvenile in some ways. I'm not a different person.

You've got some naked scenes in *The Aviator*. Did you find filming those scenes hard?

I didn't really think about it that much. There was a lot more naked stuff that they didn't show in the movie! I was actually naked for a good couple of days there - fully naked in front of everybody. [laughs]

What was it like working with Cate Blanchett?

Genius. She's probably the best working actress out there.

No one else could've played Katharine Hepburn, so thank God she accepted the role.

What do you make of all the Oscar talk at the moment?

Of course, having your peers recognise your work would be a great feeling, but it's not the right reason to decide to do a movie in the first place.

Howard Hughes went into hiding later in his life.

Can you relate to that?

Sure, all the time. But I never do and I don't let myself be a victim of this ridiculous thing that is being recognised. There

are a lot of worse things going on in the world that people have to deal with. It's not as if being famous is a civil human rights issue that people should be concerned with. Who cares about us? We're the lucky bastards! Worry about the rest of the world!

Can you tell if people are being genuine when they talk to you, or just sucking up?

I can see it in their eyes. They may think I'm a certain way and have this misconception about me, but I'm not going to make that a problem in my life. I'm just going to continue being me; that's all you can do, right? But in a lot of ways, I've got such a great group of friends around me that I don't need any more friends, you know what I mean?

Are there any historical figures, such as Howard Hughes, you'd like to meet?

I'd rather meet a brachiosaurus, or a tyrannosaurus rex!

OK, that's pretty silly!

Pathetic, is what it is. Hey, I told you I was juvenile! [laughs]

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SPUNKOMETER

Suit style: On the money.

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Oscar odds: Leo's a real contender this year.

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