



Two of us

VINCENT MOLONEY & DOMINIC BILLINGS

Dominic Billings 29 (right), and Vincent Moloney 29, founded Soup du jour Productions in 2008. They met in 1991 as Prep Students, collaborating on their first story “Dino-Jammers” as six year olds. Twenty-three years on they will debut their first feature film “200 Grams” at this year’s Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

VINCE: Dom has always been an interesting cat. I don’t recall our exact first meeting but he captured my attention during Grade One when he accidentally murdered our classroom Axolotyl (Mexican Walking Fish). The Axolotyl was a classroom pet quietly occupying our classroom until Dom dropped a UHU glue stick in the tank. The glue was obviously too big a change in diet to the worms that these amphibians usually eat. Dom was never questioned in relation to the incident.

We spent a lot of time together on the yard during recess time, playing with Dom’s ever growing Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles collection. I remember he had a figurine of “Mondo Gecko”. It was unprecedented to own a secondary character as obscure as “Mondo Gecko”. Dom’s popularity benefited greatly from this. He was also generous in sharing his great play-lunches with me. Roll-ups were a welcome change to vegemite on saladas.

The first time I realised that Dom was really funny was in Grade 3. Our Teacher was reading the class a story with his view of the students obstructed by the book. The teacher had a significant bunch up in the crotch of his chino pants. Dom made a decision that

day to crawl past several students, touch the bunch up with his finger (without the teacher noticing) and crawl back to our group. In that moment he cemented his place as my funniest friend. I must stress that he didn’t touch the teacher’s penis, just his pants.

We’ve remained good friends ever since and rarely had any down times. I did lose Dom to a social coma when we were about 20 years old. We called this Dom’s “Syd Barrett” era. He basically stayed inside for 2 years watching TV, eating chocolate ripple biscuits and wearing a nike cap. I didn’t know much about depression at that time but I guess Dom was suffering from it. Luckily he came out of his social coma to found Soup du Jour Productions with me which started with a community radio program in 2008.

I laugh loud and often when I’m around Dom. One of my favorite things to do in life is to sit around with him in cafes on weekdays talking, just waiting for the moment when I’m going to spit out my coffee and start banging the table to curtail my laughter. To avoid overstaying our welcome at cafes we will often order what we call “time extensions”. It’s basically ordering the cheapest thing on the menu,

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usually toast or banana bread just so that we feel justified in staying. We rarely eat the toast. When Dom isn’t lamenting the fact that he eats too many Vita-Brits, he is one of the funniest and most interesting people you could spend your time with. I’m very lucky to have access to his unique mind.

DOM: Most filmmaking duos trace their creative bond to the womb, whether it be the brothers Coen, Farrelly or the Wachowski siblings. Vince and I claim the conception of our pairing to be that of the classwomb.

Our first weeks of primary school in Surrey Hills forged an early rivalry in the form of dueling Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles films. The respective projects divided the class in to competing camps, pledging fealty to the more attractive film under development, with classmates crossing the aisle and back several times over.

I think the early antipathy grew out of a school-wide craft day in the schoolyard in the first two weeks of primary school, in which I was rebuffed from joining Vince and another friend he’d established from kindergarten. I spent the remainder of the day making a Batmobile by myself, wondering why Mum had given me Nutri-Grains in Glad-Wrap for play lunch. I’ve always been a bit of a self-imposed loner, and I wonder if this can in some ways be traced back to this.

Further in to the school year, Vince and I brokered an armistice, merging the two Ninja Turtles films, heralding a now 24-year collaboration. Prior to our feature film premiere in late 2013, the peak of our artistry was DinoJammers, a short story serial eventually franchised out to fellow classmates that drew like alchemy on the dual 8-year-old obsessions of 1993: Jurassic Park and NBA basketball.

If I had to pinpoint the cementing of our friendship, I’d say it was during the first play date of ours at his house, during which I continually recited, “I will fight you, on one condition: you know your nipples”, a misheard line from Hercules Returns, a film I’d seen advertised on a VHS tape. Vince and his brother Tom thought this was a riot, and I got the sense my presence was somewhat of a novelty in their household.

It sometimes occurs to me that hearty laughter comes rarely for me, but often at just the moment I need it, I’ll open an email, or sit down for a coffee with an opening remark from Vince, that makes me push back from the table and screech with laughter, doubling over for up to a minute. It’s the best feeling in the world to my mind. Vince and I caught up for a coffee after he’d returned from a 6-week summer holiday in Europe last year. The first thing we talked about was grey marle jumpers.

Soup du Jour Productions first feature film “200 Grams” will screen on April 1st and April 8th as part of this years Melbourne International Comedy Festival. Tickets at <http://www.comedyfestival.com.au/2015/season/>

INTERVIEWS BY
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