

Channing Tatum

Steps Up

STEP UP star Channing Tatum gives up dance shoes but not his fast-moving feet for this action-filled film. Shawn MacArthur (Tatum) finds New York City is an unfriendly place when he moves to the metropolis from a small town, but conman Harvey Boarden (IRON MAN's Terrence Howard) sees Shawn's potential to be a great street fighter. Shawn battles big names and brutal brawlers on his way to the top, but he soon realizes the world of New York street fighting may be impossible to escape. COMBAT FILM caught up with Tatum to find out about his FIGHTING credentials...

Is it true that you suggested the idea for this film?

CHANNING TATUM: I suggested the idea of fighting. Robert Munic brought a great script to us but it was about basketball and I just didn't want to play basketball. I suck at basketball. While we were filming this movie we did a scene on a basketball court, and I shot and I missed the entire goal. I looked over and said: "Thank god we didn't do a basketball film."

(Director) Dito (Montiel) had read the script, and he saw the opportunity to bring two characters to the screen that we haven't seen in commercial films for awhile - like Midnight Cowboy with Ratso and Joe Buck.

Could you relate to the fighting like this?

CHANNING TATUM: I'm from the south, Alabama and I've been an athlete playing football so I've been in my fair share of scrapes. Look I'm not a fighter at all. I would probably run more these days, but I do like watching fighting like Strike Force though.

But this is like fighting to the death

CHANNING TATUM: This could get really bad. There is an understanding with fighters - I don't want to kill you. I

just want to win, but in street fighting it could go all the way, so that's what is really scary nowadays. People don't know when to stop.

How real is that whole underground fighting world?

CHANNING TATUM: It's very real. I don't think it's as glamorous as it's portrayed. So many people are betting. You can get all of this information online. There's Felony Fights on YouTube. There is a lot of underground type of fighting going on and some of it is not safe, it's pretty brutal. But it's absolutely fascinating.

You are physical actor, and coming from acting, was it hard to be accepted as a serious actor?

CHANNING TATUM: It was a very hard. I came from the modeling world and I would go to movie castings and they would say they don't want any past models. You know I won the lottery. My parents had great genes. It's not a big hurdle because it probably works more for you then against you by leaps and bounds. I'm very happy to be working.

Did you do much stunt work in Fighting?

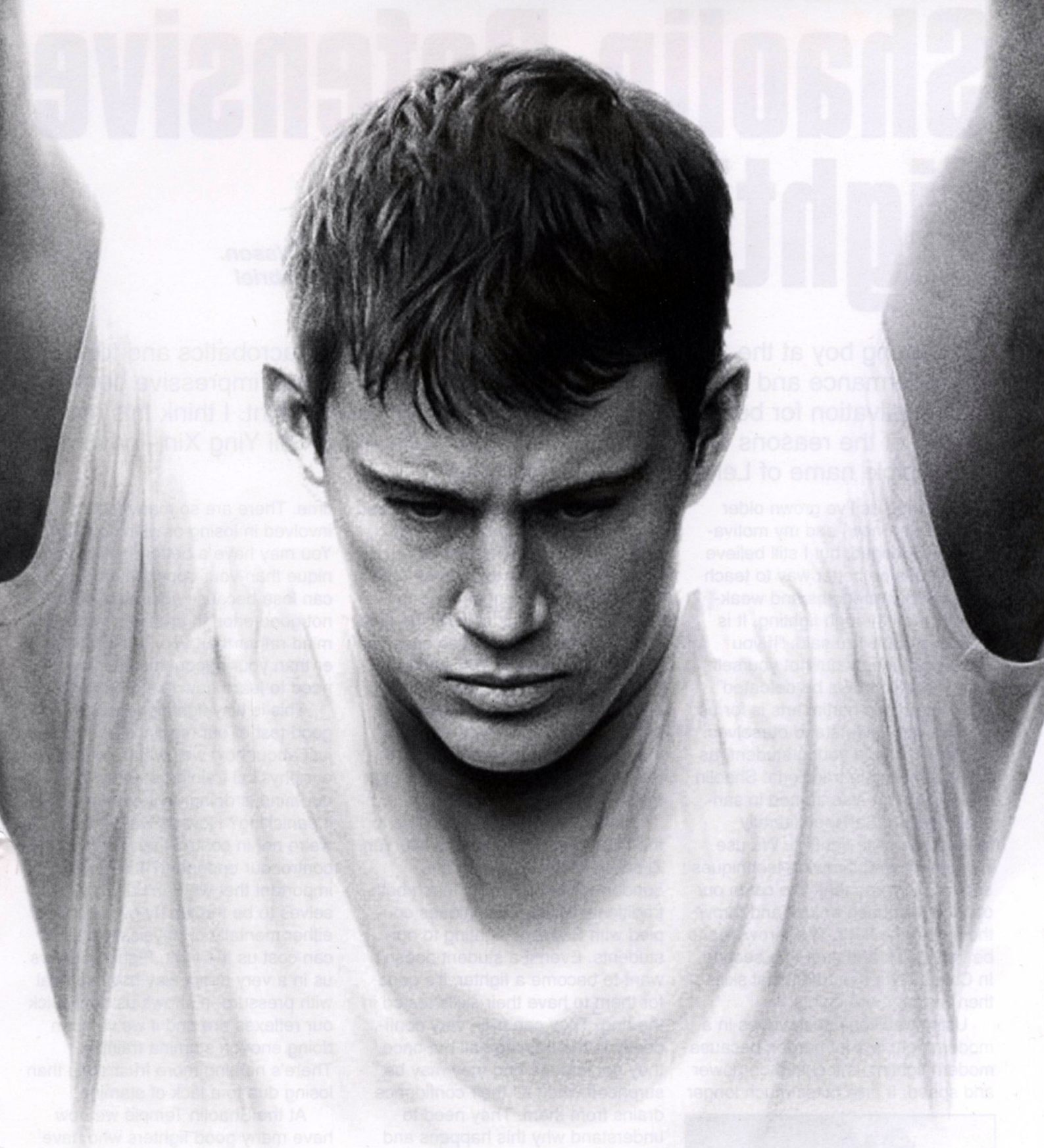
CHANNING TATUM: Yeah, in Fighting there's not a frame that I'm not in. That was very important to me. I wasn't going to do the movie unless I could actually do those physical scenes - fighting, dancing, flipping, anything physical, I can do that. In my mind I could probably do that better than the stunt.

Did you get hurt?

CHANNING TATUM: Yeah I busted my nose up a little bit. I had bruises everywhere by the end of it.

You have two huge movies, GI Joe and Public Enemies coming out. Your name is around Hollywood, on billboards and on magazine covers. You're the next Hollywood 'big thing'...how does that feel?





CHANNING TATUM: It's a bit of a bubble right now, it hasn't popped. I don't know exactly. Every once in a while I'll feel it like if I'm walking through an airport and there's a (laughs) a high school field trip or something, then that can get a little crazy.

You seem very grounded - is that from your family?

CHANNING TATUM: I'm from the south, from a little town in Alabama. My family are just good normal people.

My family and friends keep me grounded.

Have you ever been so angry in your own life that you've just hit someone?

CHANNING TATUM: (Laughs) I've been in my fair share of scrapes, but I'm not a fighter. I'm not a tough guy at all. I walk away from fights now.

FIGHTING is out on the 28th September priced from £12.99