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The Southland Times

# Unwind



**JAVIER'S LOVE**  
... of acting **D4**



**Aussie fro:** Actor Robert Downey Jr in a scene from the upcoming film *Tropic Thunder*.  
REUTERS

# Battle of wits

Robert Downey jr talks to **Peter Mitchell** about his battle with drugs and new movie *Tropic Thunder*.

**F**ORTY-THREE-YEAR-OLD Robert Downey jr has overcome plenty, whether it was his battle with drugs in the 1990s and early 2000s that landed him in jail, or roles few actors could pull off, such as his best actor Oscar-nominated performance in *Chaplin*.

When Ben Stiller phoned him a year or so ago, Downey wondered if he had finally met his match.

The role Stiller was offering Downey was an odd one. It was for the action-comedy *Tropic Thunder* co-written and to be directed by Stiller.

Stiller was targeting Downey to play the character Kirk Lazarus, a roguish, hardcore, method-style Australian actor.

Mastering an Aussie accent was the easy part. The great challenge for Downey was he not only had to play Aussie ocker Lazarus, but also play Lazarus portraying an African American army sergeant, Lincoln Osiris. Confused? So was Downey.

"Yeah, sure I was," the actor laughed during an interview at a West Hollywood hotel recently.

*Tropic Thunder* is a spoof of *Platoon*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Hamburger Hill* and other 1980s Hollywood films set during the Vietnam War.

The story follows a group of pampered, self-obsessed actors, including Lazarus, as they attempt to shoot a war movie in a jungle in South-east Asia.

The actors stumble into an area controlled by a drug syndicate, but are so self-absorbed they do not realise the heavily armed traffickers who chopped off their director's head are the real deal.

They think they are other actors and it's all part of the movie.

Stiller, who also stars in *Tropic Thunder*, recruited a who's who of A-List Hollywood acting talent including Nick Nolte, Jack Black, Matthew McConaughey, Tobey Maguire, Jon Voight, Alicia Silverstone and a surprising cameo by a hard to recognise Tom Cruise, to act alongside Downey.

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Sometimes it pays not to listen

**MATE**  
MARK WILSON



**A**BOUT three and a half years ago I was helping a friend with her CV, which is quite ironic in itself considering I don't even possess one of those so-called essential documents and have serious questions over their merit.

Think about it? You can write whatever codswallop you like in these illustrious fortresses of smoke and mirrors. Whether the content bears relevance to the realms of truth or resides somewhere in the mythical world of fiction is neither here nor there.

Former Immigration chief Mary-Anne Thompson displayed this fact with her manipulation of the CV system at the highest level to progress through the ranks of bureaucracy.

A myriad of other critical appraisals in life are carried out by our peers, employers, coaches, teachers, and significant others yet society's single most-relied-upon document in relation to us as individuals is penned by ourselves — subject only to our heady views of self-grandeur.

I've read a few CVs and I'm sure there are employers whose CV-reading endeavour have levelled a few thousand acres of Amazon rainforest only to discover each potential employee has managed to string together a plethora of enlightening adjectives that run along the lines of: I am an honest, trustworthy, punctual individual who enjoys challenges, working as a team, cleaning the toilets and getting your coffee, yet despite my incredible team-work skills I am able to competently work unsupervised looking up Facebook with great precision.

It's human nature to see oneself in the most positive of lights. No one is going to fire in a CV reading: I am frequently late and hungover, yet a great asset at staff parties and conferences with open bars. I enjoy Facebook and given the chance to work here I will improve my Facebook profile six-fold while contributing to a two-fold decrease in your workplace productivity.

Now that it's noted, I'm not the world's biggest fan of CVs, back to the story.

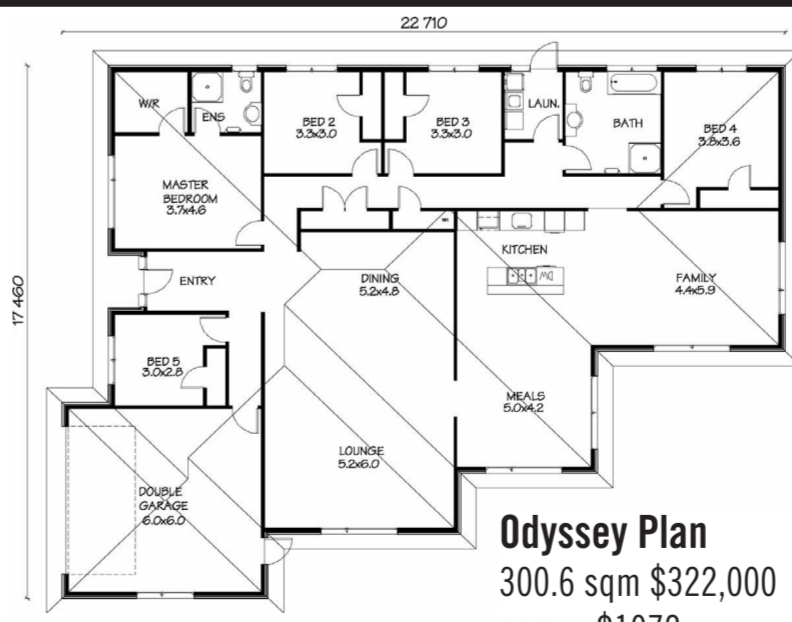
This friend proceeded to obtain an employment offer with a large national firm after a graduate recruitment programme.

However, like there often is in these crossroads of life situations, there was a catch. After a pretty useful career in netball this young lady had been tickled by the endurance sport bug, a multisport race in Queenstown and a few miles round the peninsula in Dunnoos on the bike, were enough to raise doubts over whether she should chase the cycling dream or go with the employment certainty. I provided my advice and said you can always ride your bike around work and it's a great opportunity to set yourself up career-wise, take the job.

Well, Ali didn't listen to me and rode her bike alright. Narrowly missing out on a bronze medal a few days ago in Beijing, I'd like to think I'm not usually wrong, wouldn't we all... but flaming arrows of Lucifer, if being right was kicking a conversion, I was so far off, I've just slotted the ball through the players' entrance tunnel.

Well done Ali, that was an awesome effort in Beijing. This is one time I don't mind being wrong.

# Central Otago Show Home – Now Open



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- ✓ **Choices we trust** – Gerard shingle, concrete tile, or metal tile roofs
- ✓ **Brands we trust** – Fisher and Paykel appliances incl double dish drawers, and range hood
- ✓ **Style** – Italian porcelain wall hung vanities
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