

Costars and pals **Gordon-Levitt** and **Danza** talk comedy — and porn!

BY BRADLEY JACOBS

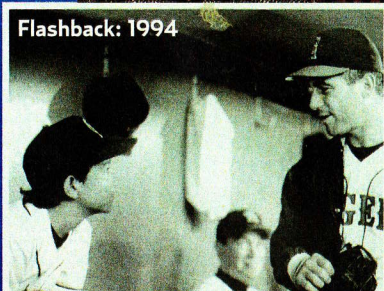
**T**ONY DANZA COULD tell that Joseph Gordon-Levitt had ambition — even at just 12 years old. When the two filmed the 1994 family flick *Angels in the Outfield*, “I wanted to hang out between takes,” Danza recalls. “But Joe would say, ‘No, I want to follow the director around.’” Nearly two decades later,

Joseph, was it nerve-racking writing a film? JGL: Any time you set out to make something, you’re going to be confronted by voices in your head that say, “Someone else can do this better! You should probably just quit right now.” But I was sort of like, This is making me laugh and I’m having a good time, so I’m just going to keep writing.

## Joseph & Tony ‘So Proud of This Kid!’

Gordon-Levitt’s work ethic has turned him into a multi-hyphenate. The *(500) Days of Summer* star has written and directed his first film, *Don Jon* (out September 27), a comedy about a guy who keeps his porn addiction hidden from his new girlfriend (Scarlett Johansson). And guess who’s playing his dad? “It’s a perfect part for Tony,” says the actor, 32. Adds Danza, 62, “I’m so proud of this kid!” The duo sat down with *Us*.

### Flashback: 1994



Gordon-Levitt prayed for Danza’s team to win in *Angels*.

“Jon’s dad ignores his family and acts lecherous toward his son’s girlfriend. I loved putting Tony in that role!”

GORDON-LEVITT ON DANZA

Scarlett was one of the first to read it. Did you pursue her right away?

JGL Yes! And then we had long conversations about love and sex and men and women. It’s a story about a guy who watches too much porn and a woman who watches too many romantic Hollywood movies. She was keen to poke fun at these parts of our culture. And she manages to balance the movie’s humor and its sincerity.

TD One moment stands out for me: when he brings her home to meet his family. As he opens the front door, she does this little dance to show she’s nervous. It’s subtle and beautiful!

Joseph, the film includes raunchy porn clips. Did you have to watch a lot of X-raters? JGL I did. And it was time-consuming. We had to find the clips, edit them and crop them just right. You

see it in montages. But the scenes are not intended to shock or make you uncomfortable. They’re meant to make you laugh.

Tony, who’s the boss? Is he pushy on set?

TD I don’t want to kiss his ass in public! But he’s a very good director. He has a strong hand and a clear vision, which made it easy. And he wrote a script that captures a moment of our culture. We’re getting desensitized. You can go on a date, go through all the motions and build a relationship. Or you can just turn on the computer. It affects your thinking. The movie is played for laughs, but there is a message.

Joseph, were your years on *3rd Rock From the Sun* comic boot camp?

JGL Oh, yes. The scenes had to snap. Comic pace is everything. We played *Don Jon* the other night, and a couple thousand people were laughing. I thought, *That’s where I learned it!* **US**

### Joseph’s Dream Girl

Scarlett Johansson is searching for her Prince Charming in *Don Jon*. Off screen, she just snagged him: The star got engaged to French journalist Romain Dauriac after a 10-month courtship. “She travels all over Paris by moped,” says a source of the NYC-bred actress, 28, who has made Paris her new home base. She’s focused on learning French as well. “Scarlett’s determined to speak it one day,” adds the insider. “Sometimes he talks to her in French, and she replies in English!”



Johansson

“I learned from watching Christopher Nolan and Steven Spielberg direct,” Gordon-Levitt (left, with Danza) tells *Us*. “I’m fortunate.”

With reporting by Omid Scobie