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McConaughey 'unabashed' in 'Dallas Buyers Club'

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This Oct. 12, 2013 photo shows actor [Matthew McConaughey](#) at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. McConaughey stars as Texan Ron Woodroof in the based-on-a-true story, "Dallas Buyers Club." The film releases, Friday, Nov. 1, 2013. (Photo by Chris Pizzello/Invision/AP)

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LOS ANGELES (AP) — In 1986, Texan Ron Woodroof was diagnosed with HIV and given 30 days to live. When receiving the news, the rodeo-lover argued with the doctor, saying only homosexuals got such a disease-and he was as straight as they came.

Matthew McConaughey, as Woodroof in the based-on-a-true-story "Dallas Buyers Club," out this Friday, is magnificently cringe-worthy as this very scene plays out in the film.

"We had to go all the way unabashed with that," said McConaughey in a recent interview to promote the film. "I would go as far as I could with the stuff that Ron thought, which was the stuff that made people go 'You bigot, racist.'"

But the beauty of Woodroof's story, and McConaughey's ability to portray him, is in its arc: Following his diagnosis, Woodroof illegally imported drugs from other countries to counteract the effects of [HIV and AIDS](#) because of the lack of treatments in the U.S. approved by the Food and Drug Administration. He also became friends and business partners with a transgender named Rayon, played by [Jared Leto](#).

To immerse himself in this role, McConaughey read Woodroof's diary and listened to hours of taped conversations between Woodroof and "Dallas Buyers Club" screenwriter Craig Borten.

"I saw a guy who was a dreamer and who was lonely, isolated, and who could never finish anything," said McConaughey. "He was aimless and the irony is it took him having HIV to help him find a goal."

To look the part of the gaunt Woodroof, McConaughey lost over 45 pounds. The first time the actor saw himself on-screen, he thought, "Whoa, you look like a reptile, man.' I didn't feel like I was watching me."

But sacrificing his good looks for the role "was not a huge concern," said the 43-year-old. "There is something valuable to not being able to use certain things that may be a strength. You use other instruments."

While [losing the weight](#), the actor said his family's reaction was subtle. "They saw me every day. But there was one day when Vidy goes 'Why is your neck like a giraffe?'" he added with a chuckle, remembering his 3-year-old daughter's reaction to his shrinking physique.

Wife Camilla Alves "helped me stay controlled," added McConaughey of his minimalist diet, which included meals like a 5 oz. piece of fish and a cup of vegetables. "But I found some sort of sick pleasure in doing all the cooking. I also needed less sleep and my memory was incredibly sharp."

But McConaughey was soon back to his 182-pound frame to play a finance fast-talker in [Martin Scorsese's](#) upcoming "The Wolf of Wall Street" and a detective in the HBO series "True Detective," premiering in January.


Grittier roles, including 2011's "Killer Joe," and 2012's "The Paperboy" and "Mud," demonstrate McConaughey's versatility, and there's talk "Dallas Buyers Club" could score him an Oscar nomination.

"I'm very excited about that possibility," he said. "I feel that it is more than fair to judge art. If that happened that's wonderful."


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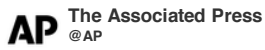
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