



'Bad boy' action star Nicolas Cage steps into real-life 'good cop' role for UN



Nicolas Cage

4 December 2009 – Acclaimed actor and filmmaker Nicolas Cage, whose action roles have included both a contract killer and a federal anti-terrorist agent, stepped into the world of real crime tonight when he was **named** Goodwill Ambassador for Global Justice for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (**UNODC**).

“Until today, justice has been a cause without a rebel now we have one,” UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa told the UN Correspondent's Association (UNCA) 14th Annual Benefit Dinner in New York, where the appointment was announced.

“The Lord of War has become a messenger for peace, the Bad Lieutenant has turned into a good cop, and the inmate from Con Air has become a champion of prison reform,” he added, referring to three of Mr. Cage's films in which he plays a gunrunner, a dirty cop and a former Army Ranger jailed for eight years for killing a drunkard in a bar brawl while defending his wife.

“My real life role as UNODC Goodwill Ambassador will certainly be even more challenging and meaningful than those I have portrayed on screen,” Mr. Cage said of his new incarnation in which he will use the performing arts as an engine for global justice and victim support. “I intend to shine the spotlight on the need for global justice, publicize all the good work that UNODC is doing, and highlight how we can all make a difference.”

Mr. Cage, who has produced, directed and acted in films often dealing with issues of global justice, terrorism, drug and arms trafficking and sex crimes, has shown a long-standing commitment to global justice and philanthropy. As an Amnesty International advocate, he raised awareness about the horrors faced by child soldiers, arms trafficking, violence against women and other human rights tragedies.

He has already worked closely with UNODC, this year launching its 'Welcome to Gulu' benefit exhibition at UN Headquarters in New York featuring paintings by former child soldiers

and abducted girls, and recently returned from a week-long mission with the agency to Uganda and Kenya, focusing on child soldiering and other forms of human trafficking, as well as piracy, prison conditions, HIV/AIDS and drug addiction.

He donated \$2 million to establish a fund to help former child soldiers, providing support for rehabilitation shelters and medical, psychological and reintegration services. He led a campaign around Lord of War to raise awareness about international arms control.

"Nicolas Cage's characters have exposed us to some of the darkest aspects of human nature. Now he is championing one of the most noble – the quest for justice," Mr. Costa said. "His star status and strong conviction on these issues will help us achieve security and justice for all."

Mr. Cage, who has starred in some 65 major motion pictures, received an Oscar Award for Best Actor for *Leaving Las Vegas*, in which he plays a suicidal alcoholic in love with a prostitute, and was later nominated for another Oscar for his dual performances in *Adaptation* as a self-loathing screenwriter and his twin brother. He has also received a Golden Globe Award, two MTV Movie Awards, a Screen Actors Guild Award and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Tonight he also received UNCA's Global Citizen of the Year Award for Humanitarian Achievements.

In addition to its high-profile drug control role, UNODC works to combat all forms of organized crime including trafficking in people, weapons, drugs and natural resources, corruption, terrorism, piracy, kidnapping, and money laundering. It also supports the rights of crime victims and prisoners, and promotes alternatives to incarceration.

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