

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

How Is This Happening?

Violet McGraw and Jack Griffo Take Double Trouble to Vegas

At the YouTube Creators Lounge at VidSummit, Paul Salfen talks with the M3GAN and Thundermans stars about a Las Vegas Christmas heist, a second chance to work as sisters, and the leap that got them here.

Interview by Paul Salfen · AMFM Magazine



Official key art for Double Trouble. Courtesy of ESX Entertainment. AMFM Magazine does not own studio art.

Paul Salfen has a neon tree behind him. He is in the YouTube Creators Lounge at VidSummit, trying, he says, to make it look a little cooler. VidSummit is not a casino, but the movie he has come to talk about is. Double Trouble, the ESX Entertainment holiday caper opening in select theaters October 9, drops two quick-witted sisters into a Las Vegas jewelry heist and asks them to recruit a jaded security guard, outlast a pack of bumbling henchmen, and stop the mastermind before their parents notice they are gone. Eighty-seven minutes. PG-13. Comedy, family, holiday. Directed by Shaun Paul Piccinino, written by John Ducey, and built, in the middle of it, on a real sister act.

Violet McGraw, who plays Willow, and Jack Griffo, who plays Juniper, sit in for the conversation. Madeleine McGraw, Violet's sister and the film's Charlotte, is the name that keeps walking into the room even when she is not on the call. Andrew Koji is David, the guard who never planned on becoming part of the adventure. Azizi Donnelly is Robyn. The production notes also list Struggle Jennings, Jesse La Flair, and a cameo from magician Shin Lim. The set, Jack will say in a minute, was a casino he already knew from the seats.

A WEIRD TIME FOR A SILLY MOVIE

Salfen opens where a lot of his conversations open, on the gap between the fantasy of the job and the job. Growing up, everybody thinks it would be cool to be in a movie. Then you get there, and it is not always fun. This one, he tells them, looked like it was.

“Absolutely, yeah, super fun,” Violet says.

Jack is just as plain about it. *“Definitely a good vibe on set, for sure. Everyone’s having a good time.”*

Salfen pushes the timing. The world is in a strange mood. A silly movie you can hand to somebody feels like the right object. Jack does not dress it up. “Absolutely.” Piccinino’s director’s statement is written in the same key: big adventure, outrageous comedy, a whole lot of heart, two sisters in over their heads who get by on quick thinking and the bond between them. The unlikely trio, sisters plus a security guard who did not audition for the hero slot, is the part of the movie the director says he loved making. From the lounge, that is also the part the two actors keep coming back to.

“It doesn’t feel very real, because it’s been a dream of ours to work together for such a long time.”

— VIOLET MCGRAW

PAID TO PLAY PRETEND

Salfen asks for the memory that stops you. The one where you look around the set and think, I get paid to do this.

Violet does not reach for a stunt or a one-liner. She reaches for her sister. They have wanted to work together for a long time. Double Trouble is the second time it has happened, and the second time did not make it feel more normal. It felt, she says, like playing pretend the way they used to, make-believe from when they were younger. “How do we... we’re working together, and it’s literally, like, our dream come true. How is this happening? It’s insane.” Both sisters are also executive producers on the film, with Jackie McGraw. The credit is on the page. The feeling she describes is older than the credit.



Violet McGraw, left, and Madeleine McGraw. The sisters play Willow and Charlotte in *Double Trouble*, their second film together. Photo courtesy of People.

Jack's version of the same question is a room he already knew as a customer. He has been to Vegas for concerts, for the Sphere, for sports. Shooting a movie there was one thing. Shooting a movie inside a casino was another. Then the production put him on the stage at the Palms, at the Pearl Theater, a room where he had already sat through two shows. "It was very full circle," he says, "and definitely, as you say, one of those moments you're like, wow, this is my job. I'm so blessed." Production notes confirm the location: the film was shot at the Palms Casino Resort. He also sings on the soundtrack, "That Feeling Back Again (This Christmas)" and "Merry Happy Christmas, Baby," both written by Katelyn Epperly and Jonathan Tinné. The stage memory and the songs sit in the same building.

"Wow. This is my job. I'm so blessed."

— JACK GRIFFO

DON'T COMPARE THE CLOCK

People watch what both of them do and decide that is the life they want. Salfen asks what advice actually travels. Violet goes straight at the comparison trap.

"Don't spend so much time comparing yourself to other actors, because it's so easy to look at somebody else's career and then feel like you're falling behind, but that's just not true," she says. "Everyone's journey happens at a different time, and you never know when your time is gonna happen, so just enjoy it all as you continue to go. And also, watch movies and feel inspired."

Jack calls it a very good answer, then adds the part that keeps a career from being only a wish. Fame and a set are a component. The job is a craft. "You have to really fall in love with an art form to have the longevity to stick with something like this. I mean, it's a hard path to take. And I do it because I love acting, and you gotta be in it for the right reasons." His practical list is unglamorous on purpose:

community theater, local acting classes, a stack of films by the actors and directors you want to emulate, watched all the way through. Pick a career and study it like a map, he says, not like a mood board.

THE HAIL MARY

Salfen's co-host on the larger show is Drew Pearson, the Dallas Cowboys receiver who caught the Hail Mary and went to the Hall of Fame. The question Pearson wanted asked is the one Salfen asks every artist who will sit for it. What was the moment you had to throw it, and it worked?

For Jack, it was the move to Los Angeles. His mother went with him. His father stayed in Florida, where Jack is from, because there was a job to keep. The father came out years later. At the start it was two people and a leap, and nothing that looked like a guarantee. "I didn't have Thundermans yet. I didn't have anything. It was really just, this was pre-COVID, this was back in 2010. The industry was here in L.A. We had to be here to audition and train. It was just a massive leap of faith that worked out."



Jack Griffo, who plays Juniper in *Double Trouble*. He calls the 2010 move from Florida to Los Angeles, with his mother, the Hail Mary of his career. Photo: Schön Magazine, photography by Ricky Middleworth.

Violet's Hail Mary arrived before she was old enough to name it. She started at five. At five, she booked *The Haunting of Hill House*, Mike Flanagan's Netflix series, as young Nell Crain. "Which was crazy and so lucky and insane to say." After they filmed it, she knew. Not as a theory. As the thing she did not know how to live without. "I don't know what I would do without acting, and I feel like that's what it kind of set me up to be like, oh yeah, I definitely just want to continue to do this and try harder and learn more in the future."

Jack, who has been in the room for the long version of this business, cannot resist the aside. "Violet's had it rough. A lot of rejection." She agrees, briefly, and does not perform the hardship. The booking at five is the lucky sentence. The years after it are the job.

"Everyone's journey happens at a different time, and you never know when your time is gonna happen."

— VIOLET MCGRAW

STAY HUMBLE, STAY OPEN

Mindset is a standing subject on Salfen's show. He asks what they keep in their head when it is time to go, onto a set or onto a stage in a big room in Vegas.

Violet keeps it short. A positive mindset. Stay humble. Stay patient. She carries advice other actors have given her and tries to bring it into the next project instead of starting from zero every time.

Jack says it depends on the job. Comedy wants the light version of him, talking to everyone, the most fun he can be without losing the scene. Drama, which he does mainly in class and which he sees as the direction of the career, asks for something else. He is still building the technique. Repetition, hard scenes from plays, big swings. What he trusts is the feeling of being inspired, and the feeling of being open: the creative side of the brain, not the analytical one, not the side that judges the take while it is still happening.

He reaches for golf, which is a useful comparison in a conversation that already has a Cowboys receiver in it. A golf swing is not natural. Neither is what actors do. "We want to self-preserve, we want to be okay, we want to gravitate towards good and the light, but what we do in drama is, we sort of have to bear these really intense, emotional, deep parts of ourselves." It is a lifelong process, he says, and that is the attraction. "You'll never master it, you'll never figure it out, and that's what I love about it."

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WHY THIS ONE

They are both at a point where a script can be a yes or a no. Salfen asks what made this one a yes.

Violet calls it a mix. She loves Christmas and is always down for a Christmas movie. She liked the team and the crew. She got to work with her sister again, which she still describes as crazy. She liked the idea. And she wanted the turn. A lot of her work has been horror: Hill House, Doctor Sleep, M3GAN and M3GAN 2.0, Thunderbolts, The Curse of the Necklace. "I love to challenge myself as an actor, so since I've done a lot of horror, I was like, okay, I want to try a comedy. Getting the opportunity to do something more fun and different than what I've done in the past was really exciting."

Jack starts from the phone call. Being wanted on a set is, for him, the best part of the work, the team and the crew and the cast. Then you read it and you actually like it. Juniper gave him room. "Getting to play this larger-than-life character, it just gives you so much permission to go for it and play these parts of yourselves, these shadow parts of yourselves that are not super likable, but that's what the character calls for." He does not want to spend a career as an easygoing Joe Schmo. Different types, he says, are the fun.

WHAT'S NEXT

Salfen closes the work talk the way he usually does. After this, what should people know about?

Violet has a horror film called Anything But Ghosts, directed by Curry Barker, the same director as Obsession. She gets audibly excited saying it. It comes out next year. Jack had not heard. "I didn't even know that, that you had a movie with the Obsession director coming out. That's so cool." She tells him

she only found out that morning that he hadn't been told. The exchange is the tone of the whole conversation: two people on the same movie, still surprising each other with the rest of the résumé.

Jack's recent one is closer to home. A Thundermans movie came out in the past month, he says, and it is doing well. He is hoping for more Thundermans. Production materials list him in a lead role on The Thundermans: Undercover for Nickelodeon and Paramount+. The leap he described from 2010 has a franchise attached to it now. He still talks about it as something he is hoping to keep, not something he assumes.

Salfen has one last question, the one about the eyeballs. Millions of them. How is that sitting? Violet says it is going good. Jack says he can't complain. Salfen calls it a blessing, thanks them for the answers, and tells them the magazine will send people to the movie.

THE SEND

Double Trouble is the kind of film Piccinino says he loves to make, and the kind of afternoon Salfen says the moment can use: something silly, something with a sister in it, something you can share. The heist is the plot. The memory Violet keeps is older than the plot. Two girls who used to play make-believe got to do it again, in a casino, with a paycheck, and still could not quite believe the room. Jack already knew the Pearl from the audience. This time the lights were his.

In select theaters October 9.

FIND VIOLET MCGRAW & JACK GRIFFO

Double Trouble — in select theaters October 9, 2026

Warner Bros. Pictures, with Warner Bros. Home Entertainment. An ESX Entertainment production in association with Lila Lane Pictures.

Directed by Shaun Paul Piccinino. Written by John Ducey. 87 minutes. PG-13. Comedy, family, holiday. Violet McGraw as Willow. Madeleine McGraw as Charlotte. Jack Griffo as Juniper. Andrew Koji as David. Also Azizi Donnelly, Struggle Jennings, Jesse La Flair, and Shin Lim.

Filmed on location at the Palms Casino Resort, Las Vegas, including the Pearl Theater.

Jack Griffo performs "That Feeling Back Again (This Christmas)" and "Merry Happy Christmas, Baby."

Official trailer: youtube.com/watch?v=nd3Hpoi7_E

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Interview conducted by Paul Salfen for AMFM Magazine, October 2026.

Paul Salfen is Managing Editor of AMFM Magazine and a veteran interviewer of film, television, music, and sports figures. He is the author of Going For It!, a collection of Hail Mary moments from the artists and athletes he has spent two decades putting on the record.