'You sort of go with it and wait until somebody calls cut,' actress tells MTV News of the 'general chaos' on set of the Sacha Baron Cohen flick.
By Fallon Prinzivalli

Sacha Baron Cohen and Anna Faris in "The Dictator"
Photo: Paramount

When MTV News spoke with Anna Faris about her role in the upcoming film, it was everything you'd expect from an interview with the comic actress. Her humorous disposition led to quite a few laughs while we got the scoop on her latest flick.

In the movie, Faris plays Zoey, a liberal idealist with a good heart who runs an organic, vegan grocery store in Brooklyn. When she meets General Aladeen (Baron Cohen) at a protest, she thinks he's a refugee and jumps at the opportunity to help him.

When we spoke to the "Scary Movie" actress, she opened up about the challenges of her role (in particular having to grow out her underarm hair), Baron Cohen's stunt at the 2012 Academy Awards and his crazy antics on set.

MTV: Zoey is a physical departure from your usual leading-lady roles in films like "The House Bunny" and "What's Your Number?" What was it that led you to choose this script?
Anna Faris: I've been such a big fan of Sacha's for years and I just jumped at the opportunity to get to work with him. I was just thrilled. That was really exciting for me. I love, in general, just

getting to transform myself for characters. That's really an exciting process for me. When they presented me with a more androgynous look, I thought that was just perfect. You know, this is the kind of girl that the dictator has never met before. He's used to sleeping with models and actresses, these really stunning women, so for a while he thinks that I'm a boy.

MTV: Was there anything challenging for you about the role?
Faris: Not so much the role, but the project was really challenging because Sacha and his whole crew, all the writers and our director, they've worked together for so long and they do so much improv. It's like 90 percent improv, and so the challenge was just keeping up with that as an actor, just being on your toes. I found it really hard, but also really exciting.

MTV: Of course, we have to ask: What was it like working with Baron Cohen?
Faris: It was amazing. He's just this sort of crazy genius. You just have to be prepared for anything. The scene [can go] in a gazillion different directions and you just have to sort of roll with the punches. But it was great, I loved it. I just adore him. He was in character a lot of the time, but when he wasn't, he's a really kind gentleman — really intellectual and very funny. I just adored him.

MTV: You said he was in character most of the time. Would you approach him in character as well?
Faris: [*Laughs*] Yeah, I kind of would! Like, "OK, wait, is this the...? Oh, wait, he's the supreme leader." It was a little tricky for me because my character isn't supposed to know that he's a dictator. So I was like, "Well, do I then? Maybe? I don't know? I'll just go to craft services."

MTV: With all the improvisation, did you have a hard time keeping a straight face on set?
Faris: Yeah, a lot of times! I mean, I feel really fortunate that I had the "Scary Movie" experience because I feel like that sort of prepared me for a lot of the general chaos of the set of "The Dictator," so I just felt like you sort of go with it and wait until somebody calls cut. Until then, you just keep acting.

MTV: He's known to make people uncomfortable, like his stunt at the Oscars where he poured fake ashes on Ryan Seacrest. Did he ever do anything that made you think, "OK, where is the

nearest exit? How can I escape this?"
Faris: [*Laughs*] No! He was actually so sweet to me. I sort of escaped all that. But he was always, you know, such a gentleman. I didn't know what it was going to be, but I did know that something was sort of afoot for the Oscars. And my husband [Chris Pratt] and I went and I saw Sacha, and I was like, "Honey, we just need to steer clear. I don't know what's going to happen, but let's just sort of avoid Sacha."

MTV: Do you have a favorite memory from shooting?
Faris: There's a scene where Sacha and I are sort of forming our friendship in an intimate way, [*laughs*] and that's really fun. I had to grow my armpit hair for the movie.

MTV News: How was that?
Faris: It was awful! I was so naive about it too. I was like, "Yeah, I'll grow it out. No big deal."

MTV News: Did your husband say anything about it?
Faris: He was such a good sport about it. He was like, "Yeah, honey! You do it. Just go." But he also didn't have to be around me too much that summer. I thought it would be, you know, fluffy and light, I guess. But it was so dark and thick and coarse. It was crazy. I felt very self-conscious about it. Maybe I was a little bit of a baby about it.

MTV News: Before we sign off, can you tell us your favorite joke?
Faris: Oh, my favorite joke! OK, let's see. A little boy and his grampa ... wait, oh no, I won't tell you that one. It's a little raunchy. But I will tell you this one: There's two blondes and there's a river in between them and one blonde says to the other blonde, "Hey, how do I get to the other side?" And the other blonde says, "You're already there!" Yep. Pretty dumb.

Are you excited to see "The Dictator"? Let us know in the comments!

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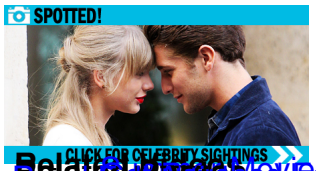

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