



ENTERTAINMENT

From the basketball court to the big screen, Lexington's Dane DiLiegro is a beast

After a decade-long hoops career, DiLiegro has become an in-demand "creature actor" in Hollywood.



Dane DiLiegro as the Predator in 20th Century Studios' "Prey." *Alberto E. Rodriguez/Getty Images; David Bukach/20th Century Studios*

By **Kevin Slane**



August 5, 2022

After a decade of playing professional basketball, Lexington native Dane DiLiegro has become a star in another arena: Hollywood.

DiLiegro, 33, has embarked on a second career as a “creature actor,” a select group of performers who bring aliens, monsters, and other assorted beasts to life on the big screen.

After scoring roles on “The Walking Dead,” “American Horror Stories,” and in **a music video** for rapper Doja Cat, DiLiegro landed the coveted role of playing the Predator in “Prey,” the latest installment in the long-running film franchise that **debuted on Hulu** August 5.

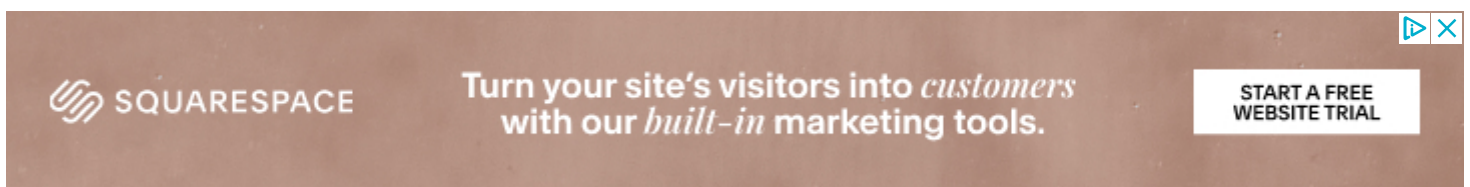



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It's been a rapid ascension for the 6-foot-9 DiLiegro, who never took theater classes while attending Lexington High, instead focusing his efforts on hoops. While he was part of the rotation on LHS's varsity squad, he was never the team's primary option. It wasn't until he put in the work during an additional year at prep school that he scored a basketball scholarship at the University of New Hampshire. A four-year starter for the Wildcats, DiLiegro parlayed his success into an overseas hoops career, mostly in Italy.

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Back in Massachusetts, between basketball seasons in 2019, DiLiegro was contacted by Boston Casting about a stand-in role in "Free Guy," the Ryan Reynolds action-comedy **filmed in the Boston area.**

The stunt coordinator on the film mentioned that DiLiegro might want to consider creature acting, though DiLiegro said his pitch was less than convincing.

"He said, 'It's uncomfortable. It's hot. It's claustrophobic. You can't go to the bathroom,'" DiLiegro said. "It's heavy. You have to be high endurance. But you get to be in big movies."

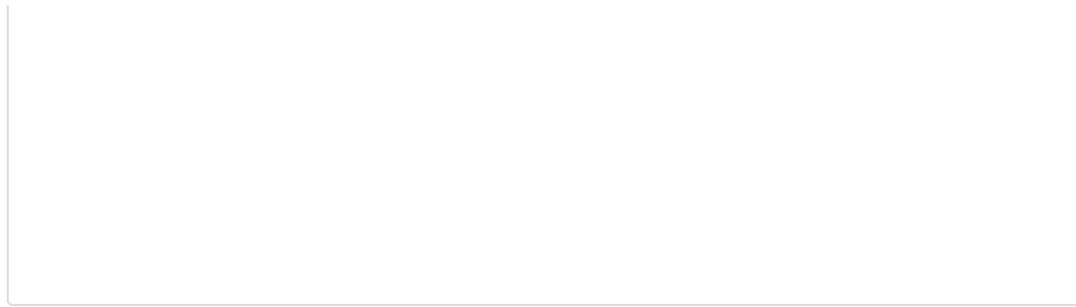
Nevertheless, DiLiegro was immediately interested. Within two weeks, he booked a role in the Netflix series "Sweet Home," jetting off to Korea to film his role as "Muscle Monster."

"I thought, 'I'll try this out for three months, and then probably go back to basketball,'" DiLiegro said. "And then the pandemic hit."



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Daejeon, South Korea





With international travel an impossibility, DiLiegro instead headed to Los Angeles, where he has officially joined the ranks of what DiLiegro estimates are “around six” fellow creature actors regularly working in Hollywood today.

In “Prey,” DiLiegro puts his 6-foot-9, 245-pound frame to good use, hunting a group of Natives one by one in pre-colonial America.

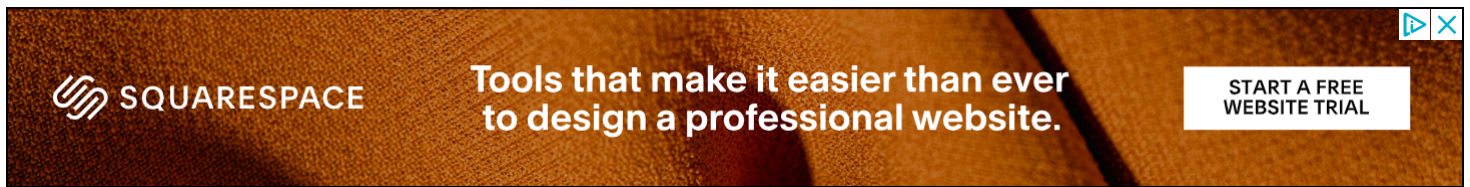
Set in the Comanche Nation in 1719, “Prey” follows Naru, a fierce young woman who wants to prove to her tribe that she’s a worthy hunter. Before long, she realizes that the prey she’s been stalking isn’t from this planet, and the hunter becomes the hunted.

Prey | First Time On Earth Featurette | Hulu



As a professional athlete, DiLiegro has always been in good shape. But the training regimen for “Prey” was, by DiLiegro’s own account, “transformative.”

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“Prey” director Dan Trachtenberg wanted DiLiegro’s Predator to be both “dynamic” and “feral,” leading the actor to lose 25 pounds before filming.

“I did two months of parkour training to learn how to run and vault over trees,” DiLiegro said. “And I did a crazy amount of martial arts training, fighting with sticks. My trainer in Los Angeles is essentially a ninja assassin in real life, and he put me through the wringer.”

Compared to the three to four hours DiLiegro had to spend in the makeup chair for “American Horror Stories,” the prep time for getting into the Predator costume was a brisk 11 minutes. But once he was in the suit, things got difficult.

“We’d shoot a scene where I’m running, and I’m wearing a 75-pound suit and a 15-pound head,” DiLiegro said. “You’re just carrying so much weight, and it’s so hot inside. Looking back, I can say it was fun, and it was a great challenge. But when you’re in it, man, it’s tough.”

“Prey” wrapped filming in 2021, and DiLiegro has kept busy since then. He will be in the HBO Max series “Coyotl,” the Disney+ fantasy series “The Quest,” and the film “Monsters of California,” directed by Blink-182’s Tom DeLonge. He also recently completed a project for Marvel and began work on a LucasFilm project, details of which are currently under wraps.



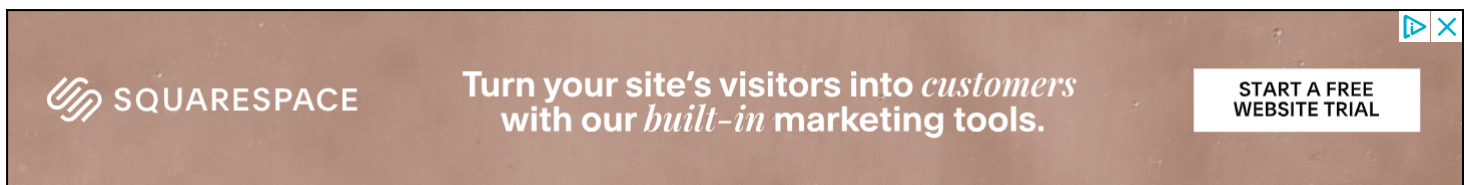
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Being able to establish himself in the world of creature acting so quickly has been a blessing for DiLiegro. But the actor hopes he'll one day be able to give a performance where he's not buried under layers of makeup or tons of prosthetics.

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“The dream is to do a project where you can see my face,” DiLiegro said. “I want people to get to know the guy under the rubber.

“I love creature acting, but I don't know that I can play monsters forever,” he continued. “It's taxing on the body. Playing a dentist, you don't have to do seven hours of makeup, you don't have to wear a 75-pound suit. I'm not complaining about that, but it would be nice to come in and do 15 minutes of makeup and wear a T-shirt.”