

Andy Garcia earns accolades for his films and music. But the only reviews that matter to him come from his wife and four children

By Melanie D.G. Kaplan  
WebMD Health Contributing Writer

# Family

GREG GORMAN/ICON INTERNATIONAL

Listening to Andy Garcia talk about his son's latest hobby, you get the sense that a toy caboose is just as important to the actor, director, and musician as the release of his latest feature film, *Ocean's Thirteen*, which opened last month to fanfare, here and abroad.

"He plays a lot of trains," Garcia says of the 5-year-old aficionado, and then adds with gravitas: "He's an avid collector."

Unlike some of his overtly ambitious, publicity-seeking peers, Garcia, 51, is a private man who treasures his family and seems to genuinely enjoy the company of his children. He carries a strong work ethic—passed along by his parents, who moved their family from Cuba to Miami when Garcia was 5—and he is constantly driving forward to fulfill his next dream as an artist.

But he is also happy being one of the guys, which he did again in *Ocean's Thirteen*, the third in a trilogy of films that began with *Ocean's Eleven*, a remake of the 1960 Rat Pack heist flick. In the movie, Garcia plays Terry Benedict and reunites with George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Don Cheadle, and Bernie Mac, a crew of actors that Garcia calls "generous and easy-going. There's a friendship that develops," he says, noting that the actors would sometimes stop by the *Ocean's* lounge set during filming on the Warner Bros. studio lot. "It's always a pleasure to hang."

# Man



Reviewed by Michael W. Smith, MD  
WebMD CHIEF MEDICAL EDITOR

Garcia's first major break was in Brian De Palma's *The Untouchables*, in 1987, and he received Oscar and Golden Globe nominations for his supporting role in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather: Part III* (1990). He went on to make strong impressions in *Dead Again* with Kenneth Branagh (1991), *When a Man Loves a Woman* with Meg Ryan (1994), and *Twisted* with Samuel L. Jackson (2004). While continuing to act, he also made his feature directorial debut in 2006 with *The Lost City*, which he starred in, alongside Dustin Hoffman and Bill Murray. And as a percussionist (bongos and congas) and pianist, Garcia has won two Grammy Awards for CDs he performed on and produced in 1994 and 2005.

Still, Garcia would much rather talk trains and family life than stardom and awards. "The most important happiness is your family's happiness," he says. "Everything else is secondary."

He says every industry—Hollywood especially—goes through cycles and fads, and you can't control the outcome. He never pays attention to reviews—good or bad. "Just do your own thing," he advises. "The only review that's important is the one at home. If you have to look outside for your self-worth and acceptance, you're in trouble, because none of that can ever be real consistent. The only thing that is consistent is what's inside your home and your relationships."

Quiet and reserved, with a soothing voice and a soft accent that reflects his

Cuban roots, Garcia tells a lot about himself by what he *doesn't* say. He doesn't drop Hollywood names or talk about parties, and he doesn't seem to be the least bit conflicted about balancing work and family. You won't hear him say he missed his children's formative years, or that he feels disconnected from his wife, Marivi Lorigo Garcia.

"We have a commitment to each other and our family and that's something we honor," he says. "You have to be religious about these things." He says that once a couple decides to have children, "every decision is made around them." And in a profession that often requires travel, Garcia has set some ground rules. Most important: Minimize time away from family, or everyone goes with him. "The key thing for me is not to be away for any long period of time," he says. "Over the years we've tried to limit it to a week. Especially when a child is young, you can't be an absentee father or mother."

### LIFE IN BALANCE

Garcia not only commits to his family, he also commits to his physical health. He used to practice yoga but found it put too much strain on his back. "I had some disc issues, and I would get hurt often doing power yoga," he says. "Pilates seems to be a lot better for it."

In fact, Pilates—which focuses on core muscles that keep the body balanced

and support the spine—is an excellent antidote for back pain, and is a good way to prevent it, says William C. Lauerman, MD, a professor of orthopedic surgery and chief of the spine surgery division at Georgetown University Medical Center. He recommends Pilates for his patients who have scoliosis and disc problems, whether or not they have had surgery. (See page 59 for more about Pilates and back pain.)

"It is a core and trunk muscle strengthening regimen," Lauerman says. "You basically build up all of those muscles in the core of your trunk, and it unloads the strain on the discs in the spine."

And for Garcia, Pilates also has the benefit of keeping his back in prime shape for hitting the fairway. "Pilates seems to be essential to keeping a healthy back," he says, "especially if you want to play golf once a week."

### ACTIVE FATHER

He and Marivi are both excellent cooks; they prefer making simple Italian and Cuban dishes, such as spaghetti carbonara and black beans. The two have been married for nearly 25 years, and he likes to tell the story of meeting her at a club and proposing that very night. "She claims I proposed to everybody that night, but it's not true," he says, deadpan. "And even if it was, that doesn't matter, because she was the one I married."

In a home where there is no such thing

as down time, the actor plays a role in the lives of each family member. The Garcias live in Los Angeles and have three daughters—Dominik, 23; Daniella, 19; and Alesandra, 16, who all currently live at home. As for the 5-year-old train buff, Andres, he accompanies Dad to L.A. Lakers games, on fishing trips, and to the golf course. Garcia also coaches his son's T-ball team.

Garcia has always been active. Back when he was a boy in Miami he played a lot of basketball (as point guard) and baseball, and he had hopes of taking his athleticism beyond high school. But now he dismisses such ideas as pie-in-the-sky fantasies of a teenager. "Every young athlete has illusions of being a professional athlete," he says, laughing softly. "Certainly, we all grow up with those."

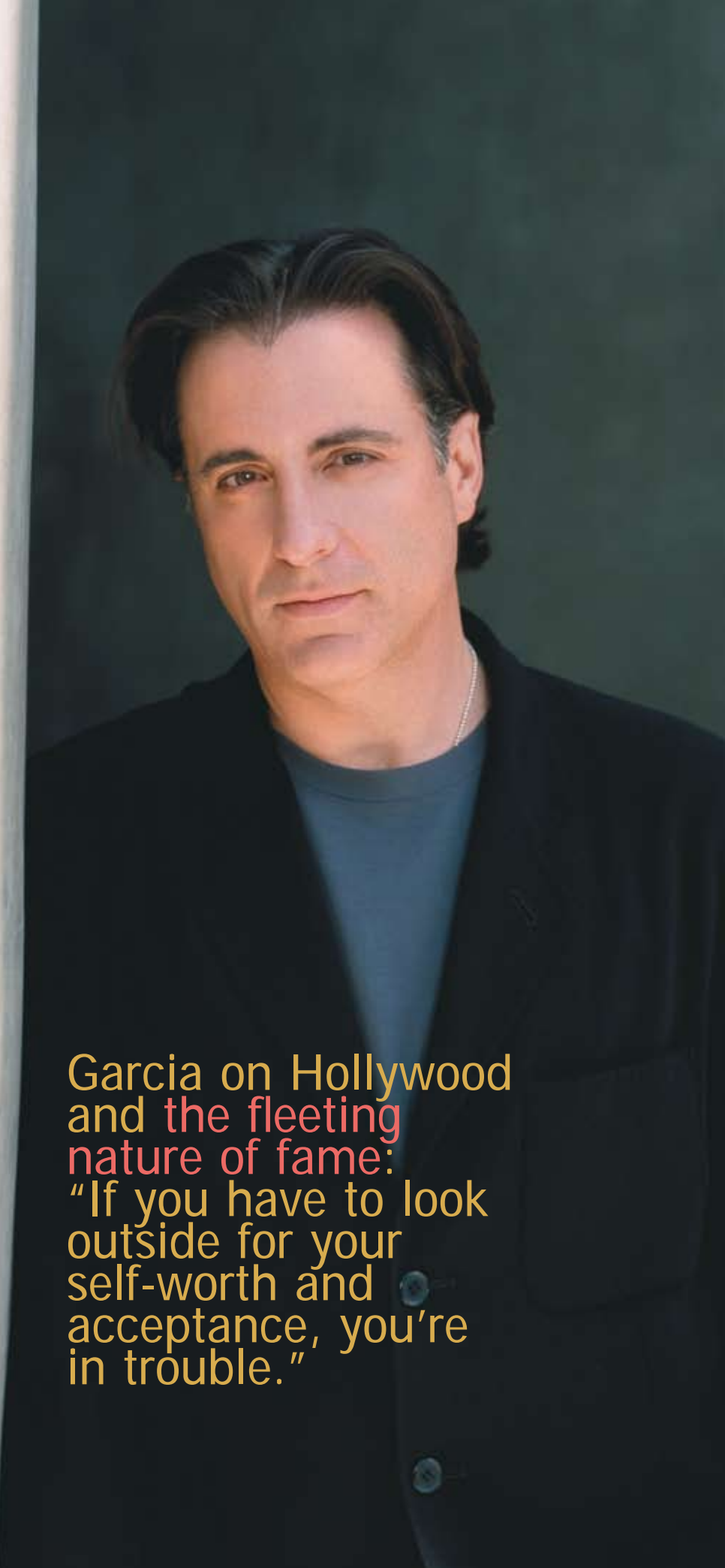
Garcia tells WebMD that a nasty case of mononucleosis he picked up as a junior set him back. While most teens who get mono recover within a month or so, Garcia says, "I got derailed. I couldn't exercise for close to six months."

According to Dr. Jeffrey Cohen, head of the Medical Virology section of the Laboratory of Clinical Infectious Diseases at NIH, Garcia's having to take a break from regular activities is a common occurrence among teenagers and young adults who have mono in high school or college, although extreme and prolonged fatigue is rare. Kids infected during childhood often have no symptoms, but adolescents and young adults more commonly do. These include fatigue, fever, headaches, rashes, and an overall sense of not feeling well. By the time students get to college, about 50% to 75% of them have been infected with Epstein-Barr, the virus that causes about 95% of all mono cases, Cohen says.

Symptoms of mono, which is spread by infected saliva, can last two to four weeks, Cohen says, and fatigue is often the last symptom to go away. Uncommonly, fatigue can last several months. He adds that high school athletes who contract mono, like Garcia did, do have to take a break from competition. Some kids are "sleeping 12 to 14 hours a day, and it can last a month."

For Garcia, his bout with mono set him on a new course: He started taking acting classes.

GREG GORMAN/ICON INTERNATIONAL



Garcia on Hollywood and the fleeting nature of fame: "If you have to look outside for your self-worth and acceptance, you're in trouble."

Garcia: *Sea of Cortez*; *The Untouchables*; *A Pacino*; *The Godfather: Part III*; *George Clooney*: *Ocean's Thirteen*.



LEFT TO RIGHT: PARAMOUNT/EVERETT COLLECTION; PARAMOUNT/EVERETT COLLECTION; WARNER BROTHERS



Left: Garcia, wife, and three daughters at the premiere of *The Lost City*, Dec. 1, 2005. Below: Garcia and daughter, May 5, 2006.

## Good for Men: Love and Marriage

Marriage is good for the body and soul, particularly for men, recent research suggests. That means Andy Garcia's marital bliss could translate into a longer life and less stress.

**L** Researcher Linda Waite, a professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, has dedicated her career to researching the positive effects of marriage, co-writing a number of books and articles on the topic. Her findings show men in happy marriages live longer, with an average lifespan of 10 years beyond that of single men. Waite hypothesizes that wedded men tend to take fewer risks and lead healthier lives than bachelors.

**a d b e e** Her research also shows that even married men in poor health or with unhealthy habits have advantages. For instance, elderly married men with heart disease live almost four years longer than unmarried men with no heart problems. And married, pack-a-day smokers live just as long as single or divorced nonsmokers.

Other experts agree. "Marriage is a stabilizing factor in life," says Jay Lebow, Ph.D., clinical professor of psychology at the Family Institute at Northwestern University. "Men are less subject to alcoholism and substance abuse, and they tend to become less depressed if they're married."

**a d e a** Their physical health improves exponentially, too. While actual study results are lacking, Lebow says clinical experience and conjecture among experts in the field point to a number of factors, some of them surprising, that back up the idea of healthier men in marriages. For instance, married men may be less likely to die in car accidents because they are less prone to driving dangerously. They also may be more likely, at their wives' urging, to frequent the doctor, meaning potentially terminal illnesses such as cancer are diagnosed earlier.—*Jennifer Dixon*



FRANZ HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES



MAGNOLIA PICTURES/EVERETT COLLECTION

Garcia, director of *The Lost City*, Feb. 1, 2005.

### FUTURE DIRECTION

Even with the box-office blockbuster *Ocean's Thirteen* opening in theaters nationwide this summer, Garcia is thinking as much about producing as acting. Next on his docket is a film based on an original screenplay, written and directed by Raymond De Felitta. *City Island* (named for a small island in the Bronx) is about a dysfunctional family. Garcia says his production company, Cine-Son Productions, is working on financing the project—a process that he knows firsthand can be grueling and long.

"For *The Lost City* [about a Havana family during the Cuban Revolution], development to production took 16 years," he says. "I could have done it sooner, but I couldn't get anyone to support it. But when we did, we were ready. We prepped it in four weeks and shot in 35 days. Sometimes it takes a long time to get a break, but when the door opens, you need to go in."

He says acting and directing are complementary, and he doesn't feel that moving toward the director's chair is a significant change. "It's all an extension of my own interests." But he says acting is more stressful because of the emotional demands. "In acting, you want to get to a place where you're completely relaxed. In directing, you have responsibility for a lot of things, but the stimulus is coming from different

## Pilates and Back Pain

To ease back discomfort and develop strong spine support, Andy Garcia turns to Pilates. And William C. Lauerman, MD, professor of orthopedic surgery and chief of the division of spine surgery at Georgetown University Medical Center, agrees with this approach. Over the past five or six years, he says, "I've become increasingly impressed by the benefit of a good Pilates regimen."

According to The Pilates Method Alliance, which establishes certification standards for Pilates instructors, people who practice the method faithfully—the Alliance recommends two to three times a week—will benefit in the following ways:

- ▶ Increased lung capacity and circulation
- ▶ Greater strength and flexibility, particularly of the abdomen and back muscles
- ▶ Better muscular and mental coordination
- ▶ Improved posture, balance, and core strength
- ▶ Improved bone density and joint health
- ▶ Positive body awareness

Lauerman advises his patients to take a class, rather than buy a videotape, and to start off with mat work (floor exercises) rather than the reformer (equipment that uses spring tension, straps, and supports). "Make sure you talk to the instructor and explain that you have a back condition or you've had surgery," he says.

But listen to your body—or rather, your back. Lauerman warns his patients away from "No pain, no gain." If your back hurts when you do Pilates (sharp or shooting pain, different from having sore muscles), or "if you can't sleep at night because of the pain," he says, then either your technique is off or "it's just not right for your back."

Get tips for balancing family and career. Go to [www.WebMD.com](http://www.WebMD.com).