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Paulie loves to leave 'em laughing

Freehold teen hits big screen in 'Speed Racer'
LISTEN IN

By **ALLISON [FREEMAN](#)**
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

Wearing a custom-made black leather racing jacket and Yves Saint Laurent sun glasses with his hair slicked back, Paulie Litt, 13, looks like a movie star – that, or a mini Arthur Fonzarelli with lighter hair.

The Freehold boy plays Spritle Racer, the mischievous, spunky little brother of "Speed Racer" in the movie based on the cartoon classic that opens Friday. After watching "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" 186 times as a little kid, Paulie told his mother, Ada, that he wanted to make people laugh and be on television and in movies. So his mom got him an agent – and he was cast for a commercial at his first audition. So far, Paulie's made 26 commercials – plus 44 episodes as Faith's son Justin on TV's "Hope & Faith" and two episodes as Joey on the Disney Channel's "Wizards of Waverly Place." He also had small parts in the movies "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," and "Jersey Girl." After "Speed Racer," he'll play Tommy Conroy in "Doubt," a religious drama starring Meryl Streep and Phillip Seymour Hoffman, which is scheduled for a December release. Paulie takes time from his lunch – a grilled cheese sandwich and a low-fat soft chocolate ice cream with roasted nuts – at Jersey Freeze to pose for pictures for two women who tell him they work at the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office. "I won't do anything bad," he promises.

Q. So does that happen often – fans recognizing you at the mall, restaurants, everywhere you go?

A. Faith and Kelly (Faith Ford and Kelly Ripa, from the TV show "Hope & Faith") told me "you got to be great to your fans. Without your fans, you are nothing."

Q. Q. You prefer being called Paulie instead of Paul?

A. It's a great nickname. Nobody really has nicknames anymore. I've always been called Paulie. Like Paulie Walnuts. You know what I mean?

Q. Paulie Walnuts? So your mom lets you watch "The Sopranos"?

A. No, but we both filmed at Silver Cup (a film studio) in Queens when I was in "Hope & Faith." It was great.

Q. What is your favorite part in "Speed Racer"?

A. When I am jumping over the couch when Racer X comes in. I made a few mistakes and after the third or fourth time, they thought I needed a little springboard to get over the couch. I said "Let me just try it,

one more try. Feet don't fail me now." I was going for it and I did it. It was a perfectly nice jump except that I ripped my pants.

Q. What was it like working with Spritle's sidekick Chim-Chim?

A. The two chimps (who played Chim-Chim) were great – Willie and Kenzie, two males. They are very well trained. They were great to work with and intelligent. They love to play.

Q. How would you compare yourself to your character, Spritle?

A. Well to start, I think the whole being with a family as a team is something I can't even imagine life without. My family is the best part of my life... my extended family too. I've always considered myself a wealthy guy in the world. Just like Spritle, I too believe honor and "your word is one's bond" is all we can really control in this world...I can't leave out that I love to be where the action is with the grownups. I feel like Spritle. As a child, I can contribute in my own way. Last but not the least, the sweet tooth. Gotta love the candy part. (In one scene in the film, Spritle and Chim-Chim pass out after indulging in so much candy.)

Q. You have a great line at the end of the film that made several boys in the audience burst out laughing at a recent screening. What was the line?

A. "Caution. The scene you are about to see may not be for the uninoculated or cootie sensitive viewer." I had a hard time saying "uninoculated."

Q. The racing in "Speed Racer" features so many colorful special effects. How did they do that?

A. A large portion of the movie was filmed on green screen – a new experience for me. You really do have to have a great imagination because there is nothing there. They fill in everything with the computer. A nice portion of the movie is done like that.

Q. What about the scenes with all of the cars including the Grand Prix?

A. The "car" is controlled by a joystick, similar to one a person has at home to play a video game. The actor responds to the movement of the person controlling the joystick... (it's) very high speed and pretty darn cool.

Q. In the breakfast scene with Royalton (Roger Allam), when everyone is eating pancakes, it looked like you and everyone else were enjoying your mom's Susan Sarandon's pancakes.

A. They were good pancakes, they had real vanilla and cinnamon. It was amaz-ing. They had a great pancake chef in Germany.

Q. The movie was filmed in Germany?

A. Yes... Germany is a beautiful country. I just love the wiener schnitzel.

Q. So are you going to be featured in any of the new "Speed Racer" toys coming out in stores?

A. I am a Lego with Chim-Chim and an action figure, too. It really looks like me. When I was in Germany, they scanned me with lasers and

put me in a 3-D form on a computer. There is a rocket launcher that comes with me.

NOTES: Allison Freeman may be reached at afreeman@starledger.com or at (973) 392-5984.

PHOTO CAPTION: Paulie Litt of Freehold is featured as Spritle Racer, the little brother of the title character in "Speed Racer," which opens Friday. The 13-year-old enjoyed working with the two chimpanzees who played his sidekick, Chim-Chim. **CREDIT:** COURTESY OF WARNER BROS.

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