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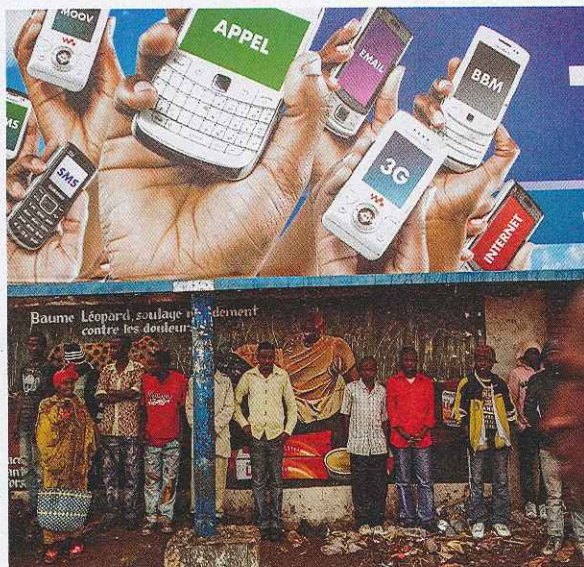
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A mobile-phone ad on a street in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo. Photograph by Michael Christopher Brown for TIME

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# Movies

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TIME'S INTERVIEW WITH  
ROBERT PATTINSON AND  
DAVID CRONENBERG, GO TO  
[time.com/pattinson](http://time.com/pattinson)



## Man and machine

Cronenberg and Pattinson  
on the set of *Cosmopolis*

"The world would be a much better place, I think," Pattinson muses, "if all these bankers and billionaires were followed by paparazzi."

In *Cosmopolis* (in limited release; expanding Aug. 24), Pattinson plays Eric as equal parts permafrost savant and boyishly charming cyborg. "I liked that it was absurd and unrelatable," he says. "Eric doesn't understand himself, so that was my angle—play the part as if you don't understand the part. Try to remain lost." His director laughs merrily at this.

Cronenberg is often attracted to books that seem resistant to adaptation (William Burroughs' trippy *Naked Lunch*, J.G. Ballard's auto-erotic *Crash*). Remarkably, *Cosmopolis* is the first of DeLillo's novels to become a film. Published in 2003, the story resonates with Occupy Wall Street and other protest movements of 2011. "When the novel came out, people were saying, 'This demonstrating-on-Wall Street stuff isn't very convincing,'" Cronenberg says. "Now it's obvious." But he dismisses the notion of *Cosmopolis* as a parable of fame, though Eric behaves and is treated much like a young celebrity—ferried behind tinted windows, fed a steady diet of attendants and libidinous women, obsessed over by shadowy weirdos—and is played by Edward Cullen, King of Hearts.

Eric's slow, strange journey eventually scans as an escape: his own protest against his alienated, ultra-materialist existence. And though *Cosmopolis* encompasses murder, marital breakdown and one very unfortunate haircut, Pattinson sees the bright side. "I've read things that describe Eric as a monster, but I always thought the story was a hopeful progression," he says. "Some people are so entrenched in what they think they are, and the only shock that can snap him out of himself is that someone is going to kill him."

"People create a limo for themselves, a little spaceship, a little bell jar in which they insulate themselves from the things that hurt," Cronenberg says. The image hangs in the air for a moment, and then it's on to the next topic. ■

## Car Talk. Robert Pattinson discusses *Cosmopolis*—and that other thing

By Jessica Winter

LET'S GET THE ELEPHANT OUT OF THE way. When I interviewed actor Robert Pattinson and director David Cronenberg in a downtown Manhattan conference space on the occasion of their new film, *Cosmopolis*, I didn't ask any direct questions about Pattinson's personal life. Mostly because Pattinson never answers questions about his personal life, which became a topic of worldwide interest when the first *Twilight* film catapulted him to stardom in 2008 and has been under especially intense scrutiny since July, when paparazzi caught his girlfriend and *Twilight* co-star Kristen Stewart with a married man. I did, however, ask him how it feels to have a global army of Twihards fretting about his postbreakup state of mind. "I guess if people think they're worried about you, it's sweet," Pattinson, 26, replied. "It's kind of odd."

"They're reacting to what they think they know, but they don't know," said Cronenberg, 69. "They have a huge investment in so many lives that they aren't connected with at all."

Pattinson's *Cosmopolis* character, Eric Packer, knows from disconnect. The icily

charismatic protagonist of Don DeLillo's source novel is a billionaire asset manager who seems to hover at a cool distance from the known world and everyone in it. Both novel and film concern a single fateful day largely spent inside Eric's white stretch limousine, which attempts to traverse Manhattan in gridlock traffic amid anticapitalist street protests—and all in pursuit of a haircut. Inside his customized cocoon, Eric receives colleagues and lovers. He forfeits hundreds of millions of dollars in a currency-speculation bid. He undergoes a bizarrely arousing prostate exam. He receives threats from a would-be assassin as well as a pie in the face from a "pastry assassin," who travels with his own squad of paparazzi.

**'The world would be a better place if bankers were followed by paparazzi.'**