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### Irish Oscar winning film's star tells of airport detention

The star of Ireland's newest Oscar winning film today told about the heavy handed tactics of US immigration officials who refused him entry to America to attend the awards.

Ruaidhri Conroy, who starred in action short Six Shooter, said he was barred from entering the States because he overstayed a visa by two days in 1998.

During his day-long detention in Los Angeles airport, the award winning actor was offered only crisps, crackers and processed noodles to eat.

Conroy claimed he had never been made to feel so unwelcome.

"I was escorted onto the plane by four officers and they said if you behave we won't handcuff. They were very heavy," he said.

Directed by renowned playwright Martin McDonagh, dark comedy Six Shooter picked up the gong for Best Live Action Short Film.

Conroy, who had a seat reserved at the 78th Annual Academy Awards in Hollywood for the ceremony, revealed how he spent 22 hours in custody at Los Angeles' LAX airport before being sent home.

"I came up with my passport and my little immigration form and they just said they wanted to talk to me about my stay there in 1998 – I was over in New York doing a play written by Martin as well actually," he told RTE Radio.

"They said I had overstayed on a visa, and I didn't think very much of it."

US immigration officials questioned Conroy about his visits to America, his parents, and warned him he might not make it into the country.

"They asked what age I was, all sorts of ridiculous questions," he said. "And then took me into a cell, a bare cell, and put me up against the wall and searched me, went through my bag, took an inventory of all my valuables and took all my fingerprints again."

Conroy told the officers he had travelled to the States to attend the Oscars.

**“I said that from the beginning, but I don’t think that impressed them very much to be honest. I think that egged them on more to keep me out of the country rather than keep me in,” he said.**

**“They weren’t very nice people to be honest, they weren’t very welcoming.”**

**He went on: “I don’t think I’ve felt so unwelcome anywhere in my life and I think they just thought that I am a young man saying I am going to the Oscars that they may have got a certain satisfaction from preventing that happening.**

**“You were treated like a criminal basically.”**

**Conroy was best known for his role as Tito in Into the West. His latest film, Six Shooter, which also stars Brendan Gleeson, has already been shown twice on RTE television and is due to be aired on Channel 4 on Wednesday.**