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# contributors



## Byron Pitts

CBS News correspondent Byron Pitts served as the network's primary correspondent at Ground Zero immediately following the Sept. 11 attacks. In this issue of *Watch!*, Pitts recounts the event and its aftermath ("The Day That Changed the World").



## Deborah Norville

Host of the nation's top newsmagazine show, *Inside Edition*, Deborah Norville is no stranger to the behind-the-scenes chaos of TV. An author and former anchor of *Today*, Norville shares her own list of insider secrets ("10 Things You Don't Know About Television").



## Jonny Mendelsson

Illustrator Jonny Mendelsson shares his interpretation of a Hollywood star's most important accessory ("Celebrity Entourage"). The former Londoner now calls the British countryside home, working in the basement of what was once the village store.



## John Filo

Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer John Filo is the director of photo operations for CBS. He also has held editing positions at *Newsweek* and *Sports Illustrated*. *Watch!* enlisted Filo to capture this issue's heist-themed fashion spread ("To Catch a Thief").



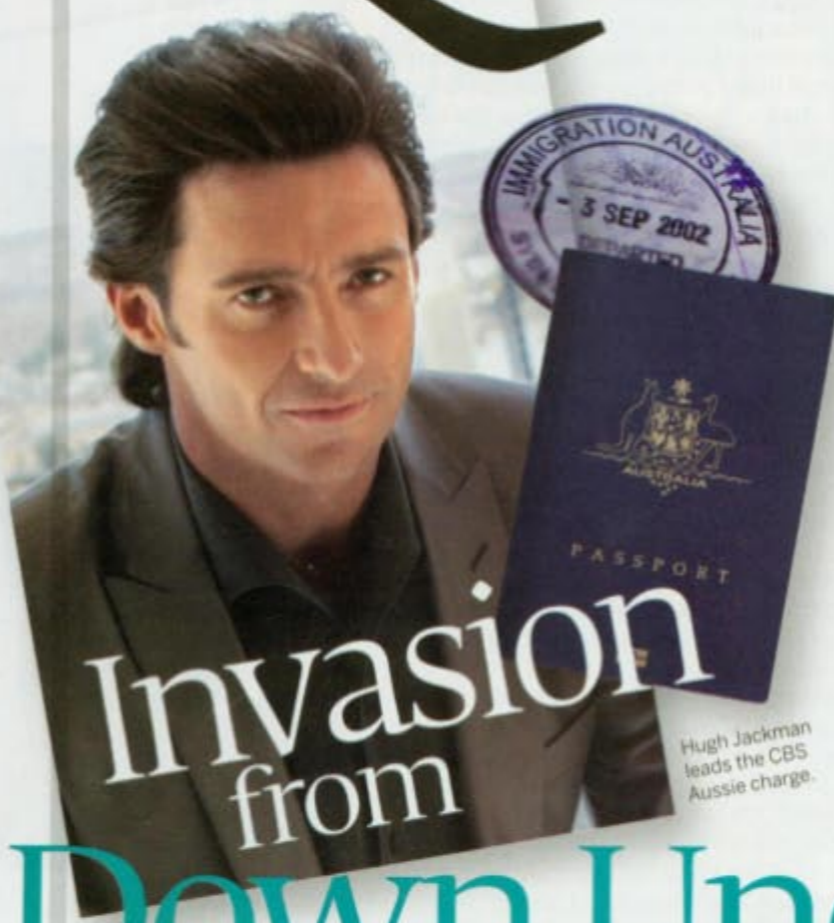
## Jim Colucci

Contributing editor Jim Colucci is the author of the TV companion books *The Q Guide to The Golden Girls* and *Will & Grace: Fabulously Uncensored*. In this issue, he tackles TV's "Invasion from Down Under" and "A Day in the Life of a TV Executive."

TELEVISION'S  
BEHIND-  
THE-SCENES  
NOTEBOOK

# QUICK TAKES

By Jim Colucci



Invasion  
from

Hugh Jackman  
leads the CBS  
Aussie charge.

## Down Under

Crikey! Bloody good actors from Australia and New Zealand are taking over CBS prime time

There's a strange new expression floating around the hallways of CBS' Television City headquarters lately. Strange because it has nothing to do with ratings or lead-ins or time slots. Instead, it's that so many of the people one might meet there these days are more apt to say simply, "G'day!"

Take, for example, Alex O'Loughlin, the American vampire in the network's new fall drama *Moonlight*, who originally hails from Australia. Or Hugh Jackman, executive producer and recurring guest star in another new fall entry, *Viva Laughlin*. Or Cameron

Daddo, the host of this summer's reality series *Pirate Master* and a graduate of Melbourne Grammar. Then there are Adelaide's Anthony LaPaglia and Sydney's Poppy Montgomery, longtime stars of *Without a Trace*. And while *Two and a Half Men's* Rose may sound like she hails from sunny Malibu, that's just a testament to the talent of actress Melanie Lynskey, originally from New Plymouth, New Zealand. Phil Keoghan, too, travels the world with *The Amazing Race*, but originally called Christchurch home. Even daytime drama has grabbed its own hunk from Down Under in recent *Guiding Light* addition and Perth native Murray Bartlett. So throw another script on the barbie, TV lovers, because ... crikey! With all these Kiwi and Aussie actors conquering the network's airwaves, CBS is in the midst of a veritable antipodean invasion.



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IN THE STARS

"I think there have always been as many good actors in Australia as there are now. The training is very rigorous, and you don't really get taken seriously there unless you have a work ethic." —Alex O'Loughlin, *Moonlight*

#### THE FIRST WAVE

In hindsight, the assault on Hollywood started years ago, with a silver-screen offensive by such now international names as Mel, Nicole, Russell, Heath and Cate. But why the Aussie actors' sudden interest in American TV? Keoghan theorizes that, even as the Internet is helping to create a global demand for entertainment, the proliferation of digital cable channels in Australia and New Zealand means, ironically, fewer ad dollars to spend on any one indigenous show. And so, the Southern Hemisphere's TV marketplace, already small, becomes even more limiting. And with nowhere to go, Australia's bumper crop of talented thespians—pouring out of more top-notch acting schools, Bartlett points out, than ever—has begun spilling onto American shores.

"But I think there have always been as many good actors in Australia as there are now," O'Loughlin says. "The training is very rigorous, and you don't really get taken seriously there unless you have a work ethic. You can't just be a pretty face and get away with it for very long." O'Loughlin credits his countrymen in film with opening doors to the U.S., which were very clearly closed not that long ago.

Keoghan agrees that Hollywood wasn't always so welcoming of offshore talent. "When I first arrived in the U.S. back in '92, using someone from *Down Under* was really a foreign idea," he says. "Even as recently as 2001 when I was up for *Race*, being from the bottom of the world really wasn't a selling point. There were simply very few, if any, openly foreign actors/personalities in prime time." In fact, during his first few years here, Keoghan recalls that his agent advised him to keep his true Kiwi identity in the closet. And so, "I would go into auditions having to audition twice," he remembers. "Making small talk with casting directors in an American accent and then [again] when I did a reading."

#### AUSSIE ACCEPTANCE

But in recent years, as Aussie actors have cut a trail through Hollywood like bushwhackers in the outback, Americans have gotten more accustomed to our cousins from *Down Under* popping up on our small screens. And what's not to like?

"I think Australians bring a laid-back, relaxed, easygoing energy that Americans might respond to," Bartlett says. Daddo agrees, pointing out the immensely likable stereotype, reinforced recently

by Paul Hogan and Steve Irwin, of Aussies as rugged and affable outdoorsmen. "There's that Australian spirit," Daddo says, "where you know that even if things go bad for you, you can still go to the beach. You can eat a meat pie. You can get crashed by some waves. And still feel good about yourself. There's a cavalier kind of strength to that, of not needing something so bad that they can smell the desperation."

#### SETTING THEIR SIGHTS ON THE STATES

As much as some Aussie actors sometimes find themselves homesick for the blokes and sheilas they left behind, Bartlett says his are a people born to travel to foreign shores. He says being Australian is like growing up in a small town: "It's a tradition for Australians to go on a big trip after high school or university and see the world, and it's the same for actors. You want to put yourself out there in a bigger pond and see the opportunities." And when they do, some Aussies boomerang back, but others stay; Daddo has lived in Los Angeles for 15 years and LaPaglia became an American citizen.

Daddo remembers meeting LaPaglia at a party 10 years ago, and remarking on his total immersion, even when the cameras weren't running, in a New York existence, complete with accent. And, not to knock the man's ability, but taking on an American identity is, these actors say, not all that hard to do. After all, as our imperialistic reruns play endlessly around the world, it's difficult even for viewers who have never left their New Zealand hometowns *not* to become accustomed to the way New Yawkers *tawk* and Southerners drawl.

"We grow up watching American television and going to American [restaurant and store] chains," Montgomery says. "I'd seen so many movies of California, and college and the beaches. And I loved *Baywatch*, which you can't help watching. I just wanted to be here."

As she and others from the Southern Hemisphere continue to shine in the U.S.—and even help tip each other off to jobs via a grapevine that Daddo calls the Aussie Bush Telegraph—it's hard not to smell a conspiracy coming out of Oz.

So what is the ultimate sinister plan? Government takeover? Or merely to secretly replace all our homegrown beer with imports like Foster's? "It's very much a covert, underground operation," Daddo admits with a sly smile. "You should be worried." **U**



#### POPPY MONTGOMERY

Samantha Spade,  
*Without a Trace*  
Birthplace: Sydney,  
Australia



#### ANTHONY LAPAGLIA

Jack Malone,  
*Without a Trace*  
Birthplace: Adelaide,  
Australia



#### ALEX O'LOUGHLIN

Mick St. John,  
*Moonlight*  
Birthplace: Canberra,  
Australia



#### PHIL KEOGHAN

Host,  
*The Amazing Race*  
Birthplace: Christchurch,  
New Zealand