

watch!

YOUR EYE ON ENTERTAINMENT

Jimmy Smits Returns

Plus: Kids Rule!
Vampires Bite!
And Two Real
Geniuses!

How to
Assemble
Your Own
**Celebrity
Entourage**

Suit Up!
Meet the execs
who decide
what you watch

Secrets
of a Production
Assistant

Hot for Teacher

Get schooled on the television
business by *Without a Trace's*
POPPY MONTGOMERY

VOL. 2 ISSUE 4
OCTOBER 2007

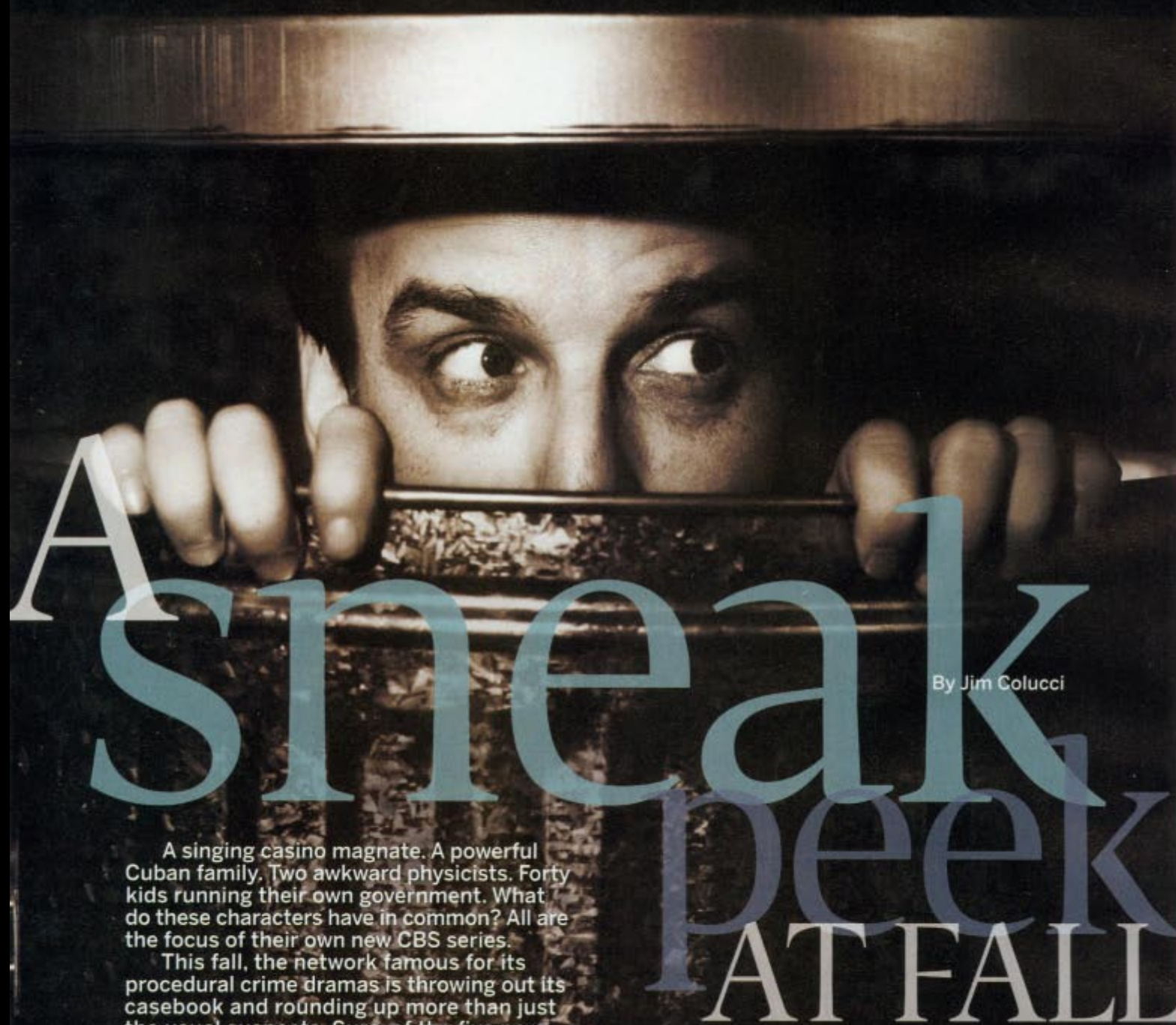
\$2.99 US/\$3.99 CAN
cbswatchmagazine.com

\$2.99US \$3.99CAN



0 74470 01545 1

Gamblers and brainiacs and vampires...
oh my! The new CBS lineup offers
a little something for everyone

A man with dark hair and intense eyes is peering through a horizontal metal grate. His hands are gripping the top and bottom edges of the grate. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting his face and the texture of the grate.

A sneak peek AT FALL

By Jim Colucci

A singing casino magnate. A powerful Cuban family. Two awkward physicists. Forty kids running their own government. What do these characters have in common? All are the focus of their own new CBS series.

This fall, the network famous for its procedural crime dramas is throwing out its casebook and rounding up more than just the usual suspects. Sure, of the five new CBS prime-time programs premiering this September, one does still feature a private investigator—but the difference is, this one is also a vampire.

It's a daring new season, with a diverse array of fresh faces and places. So stay tuned—because any of these newcomers just might become TV's Next Big Thing.

Viva Laughlin



Gambling hasn't looked—or sounded—this good since Elvis. *Viva Laughlin*'s Nicky Fontana (Hugh Jackman) and Ripley Holden (Lloyd Owen).

Sundays, 8 p.m. EST/PST

Ripley Holden (Lloyd Owen) is the ultimate gambler, whose sole ambition is to open his own casino in Laughlin, Nev. But when his financing suddenly falls through, the fearless and tenacious businessman approaches his enemy—the dashing, sarcastic and wealthy casino owner Nicky Fontana (a recurring role played by the show's executive producer, Hugh Jackman)—for help. The odds are against the struggling, half-completed casino ever seeing the light of neon—especially when Ripley becomes embroiled in a murder investigation after the body of his ex-business partner is found at his club. All of this adversity—with a side bet on family issues arising from a neglected home life with wife Natalie (Madchen Amick) and two teenagers—would defeat a lesser man. But for the outgoing and passionate Ripley, there's no such thing as bad news; there are only deals to be struck and wagers to be won.

Occasionally using upbeat contemporary songs to accentuate the drama and humor, and advance the story, the series is based on the hit BBC show *Viva Blackpool*. Owen explains that *Viva* is "in the same mold as the work of Dennis Potter," the popular British TV writer/producer. And so *Viva Laughlin* brings something truly original to American TV.

QA & Lloyd Owen

Watch! What first attracted you to *Viva Laughlin*?

Lloyd Owen: I never watched *Viva Blackpool* at home in England, but knew of its success. Then they started casting for this in both England and the U.S., and I got ahold of a script and loved it, and in particular the role of Ripley, which for an actor is absolutely "cracking," which means really brilliant or fantastic.

W: What's so crackling about him?

LO: Ripley struggles with a very dark side to his personality. He's trying to be a moral person,

but the restrictions he's putting on himself don't match well with stuff he has done in his past. He's trying to be a good man, a good husband, a good father. But he's also trying to be a hugely successful businessman in a gambling town, which requires some underhanded work. That balancing act is really exciting to play. And on top of the moral struggle, the man just happens to be a fantastic singer and dancer.

W: What are the musical scenes like to play?

LO: I have a very strong theater background in the U.K., but musical theater is new for me. However, I can sing and dance, and have spent most of my life indoors doing just that. But there's a brand-new sound they use on this show, which was pioneered in the movie *Dreamgirls*. Instead of prerecording a song and then lip-syncing to yourself as you dance on the set, you can actually sing live as they record. So I've begun to understand the athleticism involved in musical theater. Nathan Lane has said doing *The Producers* was like being in the



Lloyd Owen stars in *Viva Laughlin*.

Olympics. With all the running around, jumping on tables and singing, trying to keep your breath, never mind hitting your notes, it's a huge challenge.

W: What was your favorite moment working on the pilot?

LO: I had an amazing scene with [recurring guest star] Melanie Griffith, where the song we sing to each other, Blondie's "One Way or Another," and our movements really suggest

a history and subtext going on beneath. You understand instantly what their relationship is without having to explain it with dialogue—it's very powerful. I was obviously a huge fan of Melanie's and had never met her before when we both came to the studio to rehearse that dance sequence. And within five minutes, she had kicked me, licked me, slapped me and pushed me on a bed. That's the weird life actors have. And then you say, "Nice to meet you."



Brainiac best friends Sheldon (Jim Parsons) and Leonard (Johnny Galecki) earn a big laugh in *The Big Bang Theory*.

Mondays, 8:30 p.m. EST/PST

From Chuck Lorre, the co-creator and executive producer of *Two and a Half Men* comes *The Big Bang Theory*, a comedy about brainiac best friends Leonard (Johnny Galecki) and Sheldon (Jim Parsons), who can tell you anything you want to know about quantum physics—but when it comes to dealing with everyday life on Earth, they're lost in the cosmos. "Our future is changing so quickly these days, and these are the Bill Gateses and Paul Allens," *Bang* co-creator Bill Prady hypothesizes in explaining his and Lorre's interest in exploring the lives of geniuses. "These are the people who are inventing that future, and yet we don't know much about them."

Neither Leonard nor Sheldon fully understands that scientific principles don't always apply in matters of the heart—until they meet their sexy new neighbor Penny (Kaley Cuoco). And when the friendly screenwriter/waitress from the Midwest meets the boys and the rest of their genius posse, the chemistry is instant. Cuoco, for one, is hopeful that one of these guys will someday get the girl. "You want to root for these guys as underdogs," she says. "I don't know why we don't go for guys like this in the beginning anyway. We always make that mistake: We go for the badass, and then we always come back to the sweet ones."

"I think we're all people who are trying to fit in," Prady adds, "and we all feel that everybody else has the whole game figured out, but somehow we didn't get the instruction manual to life. *The Big Bang Theory* is kind of comforting when you realize that these guys prove that even extreme intelligence doesn't help."



Penny (Kaley Cuoco) and Wolowitz (Simon Helberg)

QA Chuck Lorre

executive producer

Watch! Math and science guys are popping up all over CBS—on *Numb3rs*, on *CSI*—and now as the leads in a comedy. Why is the brainy bunch suddenly so popular?

Chuck Lorre: I don't even know if I think of the guys in *The Big Bang Theory* as nerds. I think of them as extraordinary people who don't fit in. They're geniuses in the way that Carl Sagan and Stephen Hawking are. They have an amazing ability to look deep into the nature of reality, but not into the nature of women or the little things in daily life we take for granted. They are very innocent, childlike characters in a way—yet they can change the world.

W: What is it that the guys can teach Kaley Cuoco's character Penny, and vice versa?

CL: I think, first and foremost, Penny has a lot of affection for them—she sees that these are very sweet and decent men. So she'll help bring them back into the real world. Imagine what happens when she introduces Sheldon to one of her girlfriends and tries to mentor him through a courtship. It's a real loving act. On the flip side, they can make her take her preconceived ideas and throw them out, and maybe see the world from an entirely new perspective.

W: Is there a chance that Penny could settle down with one of the guys?

CL: There's definitely a chance that that could happen. Over time, she could see particularly Johnny Galecki's character, Leonard, as a legitimate suitor. But Leonard should be careful what he wishes for. These two are worlds apart, so the physical attraction can get him into trouble. If they were to have a relationship, they'd still be very, very different people. So I think we have a lot to write about.

W: How did you come up with the idea to create a show around characters so unique for TV?

CL: It helps that [co-creator] Bill Prady is a genius, and I'm socially awkward, so we make a good combination. But Bill, early in his life, was a computer programmer, and he was in a world of these kinds of minds. We got to talking about them and realized these are great characters. They're people you can root for and care about, and who would be very funny because they're so innocent in the real world. And yet, so extraordinary.

W: How do you do the research to write some of these really smart things these guys are going to talk about?

CL: Like I said, Prady is kind of a genius. He lays out the general area of a speech—like the one in the pilot about the paradox of light being both a particle and a wave. Then we call our consultant, a physicist at UCLA, and he cleans it up for us. It's important to us that we don't insult those people if they watch. We want them to watch and go, "Yes!"

The Big Bang Theory

Amalia (Rita Moreno), Pancho (Hector Elizondo), Isabel (Paola Turbay) and Alex (Jimmy Smits) star in *Cane*.



QA & Jimmy Smits

Watch!: What attracted you to *Cane*?

Jimmy Smits: The bottom line was the script. The quality was on the page. Cynthia Cidre, who wrote the pilot, comes from a Cuban-American family, and she's had this script inside her that she always wanted to write. She's lived it. Not literally, in terms of the sugar cane business, but just in knowing that world of an upscale Latino family with strong, positive values. I'm definitely attracted to the fact that as a prism for looking at Latino life, this particular family is aspirational and multigenerational, too. It's something that so far America hasn't seen a lot of.

W: Would you say there is no show like *Cane* on TV now?

JS: They do exist, but not so much on network television. You can pick your favorite show, like *The Sopranos*, or *Rome*, or *Nip/Tuck*—they're on cable, and they tend to be edgier. And CBS has given *Cane*'s team of producers—and I'm honored to be one of them—the latitude to push the envelope a little bit. Nina Tassler and Les Moonves have been supportive of us thinking outside the box. After all, CBS has made its bread and butter on procedural dramas, and has done very well. But there's also room in that universe for an engaging, edgy serialized drama.

W: The show is full of familiar, and in some cases legendary, faces. What is it like working with the cast of *Cane*?

JS: I'm so honored to work with Hector Elizondo and Rita Moreno, who have both influenced me so much as an actor. Plus we also have Polly Walker, who was in *Rome*, Ken Howard, from *The White Shadow*, and Lee Tergesen, who was in *Oz*. It's a cast that's not only very beautiful, but versatile, too. We could go from Shakespeare to Cervantes to ... Cidre.

Tuesdays, 10 p.m. EST/PST

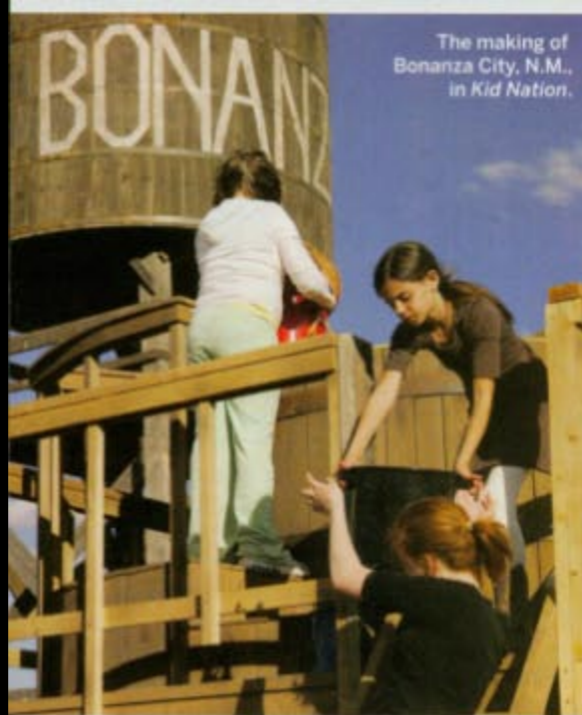
Cane stars Emmy-winner Jimmy Smits in an epic drama about the external rivalries and internal power struggles of the large Cuban-American Duque family as they run a successful rum and sugar empire in South Florida. When the family patriarch, Pancho (Hector Elizondo), is offered a lucrative but questionable buyout deal by his bitter adversaries the Samuels family, he's faced with a tough choice: Should he cash out of the sugar business and focus solely on rum, which would please his impulsive natural son Frank (Nestor Carbonell), or protect the family legacy by not selling and side with his adopted son Alex (Smits). For them and the rest of the Duque clan, their struggles will test family allegiances, spill secrets and possibly end up anything but sweet.

Cane's large cast of well-known faces also boasts as the Duque family's matriarch Rita Moreno, whose iconic portrayal of *West Side Story*'s Anita won her the Oscar for best supporting actress in 1962. Moreno says that upon reading *Cane*'s pilot script she was immediately attracted to the sometimes dark saga "because it is about something amazing—an affluent Latino family on television ... Can you imagine? This family is successful, educated, sophisticated, elegant. They dress to the nines, and not one of them has one of those hideous accents like "these" that I have had to indulge in for much of my theatrical life."

Both Moreno and Elizondo agree that the Duques exhibit many positive Latino traits: They're warm, they're passionate, and, says Elizondo with amazement, "for a TV family, these are folks who actually cook and eat real food!"

Smits returns to prime time in *Cane*, running a successful rum and sugar business in South Florida.





The making of Bonanza City, N.M., in *Kid Nation*.

Wednesdays, 8 p.m. EST/PST

Kid Nation is a reality-based series in which 40 kids have 40 days to build a new world—in a ghost town that died in the 19th century. The kids, ages 8 to 15, spend more than a month without parents or modern comforts in Bonanza City, N.M., attempting to do what their forefathers could not: build a town that works. They must cook their own meals, clean their own outhouses, and even run their own businesses, including the old town saloon (relax, it serves root beer only). They also create a real government: four kid leaders to guide their peers through their adventure, pass laws and even set bedtimes. Through it all, they cope with regular childhood emotions and situations, from homesickness and peer pressure to the urge to break every rule they've ever known.

At the end of each episode, all 40 kids gather at an old-fashioned Town Hall meeting to debate the issues facing Bonanza City. But unlike on other reality shows, there are no eliminations on *Kid Nation*; you go home early only if you want to. And although each episode offers one deserving kid "pioneer" a monetary incentive—a solid-gold star that, valued at around \$20,000, is enough to pay for a year of college—executive producer Tom Forman and host Jonathan Karsh say that the kids' obvious stick-to-itiveness has no sticker price. None of the kids knew there would be prizes, Forman says, when the geographically, ethnically and religiously diverse cast was assembled in a nationwide casting search for, as he notes, "the best, brightest, funniest, most talented—and some regular kids."

"These kids are just excited about building a better world," Forman marvels. "And that's what they do. I think they are as surprised as anyone when it turns out there's a reward. Because to our surprise, it turns out they don't need it."

Kid Nation

QA Tom Forman executive producer & Jonathan Karsh producer/host

Watch! Tom, you were also one of the Emmy-winning executive producers behind *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, which has a message much more positive than most reality shows. Is *Kid Nation* meant to be similarly uplifting?

Tom Forman: This show has a little bit of everything. There are moments in this show that are more inspiring than anything I have ever seen in my life or my career. Here the kids come together to help each other out instead of driving each other off. That's unique for a reality show. And at the same time, these kids are filled with passion and when they fight, boy do they fight.

W: Is the fighting more or less dramatic than the adults bickering on other reality shows?

TF: It's more honest. Everything they do is more honest. My sense with every other reality show is that if

the cameras left, so would the cast. They're there to be on television. But these kids were here to build a better world. We would look out the window and see a kid out pumping and hauling water, making a meal, working to build their community with no camera in sight. They were determined to do this whether we were making a television show or not.

W: Did the show's ending surprise you?

Jonathan Karsh: I was surprised by the level of honesty and how articulate, smart and funny these kids were. I never expected going into this what this cast would become. We developed a format for the show over many months, but then it really took on a life of its own once the kids arrived in Bonanza City. They took over, and we were just following them. And at every turn, the kids did something much more interesting, more fascinating or smarter than we ever thought.

W: So on their report cards, you'd say these kids "overperformed expectations?"

JK: A lot of them overperformed, and some of them grossly underperformed. **TF:** I'm a parent of two myself, and Jonathan has one. I can't imagine my children doing what these kids did. They would get up in the morning and pump water. They would cook breakfast for 40 over a wood-burning stove, haul their own garbage, and when they were done, sit down and make laws and decisions about how a town should work that were arguably smarter than the decisions their parents would make. Some of these kids are 8. It blew me away every day their passion, dedication and ability.

JK: One of the kids toward the end said, "We've tackled the war on Iraq, gay marriage, immigration, pollution and education. And we settled it all—what's wrong with adults?"



In this reality show, it's not all fun and games. In fact, there's quite a bit of hard work in Bonanza City.



Private investigator, bachelor ... vampire, Mick St. John (Alex O'Loughlin) in *Moonlight*.

Fridays, 9 p.m. EST/PST

Meet Mick St. John: private investigator, bachelor ... vampire. Sixty years ago, Mick (Alex O'Loughlin) was "bitten" by his new, beguiling bride Coraline. "Mick meets Coraline and falls head over heels," O'Loughlin says. "And let's just say there's a great line in the pilot: 'Sometimes you fall in love with a woman so hard you miss things maybe you should have seen.'"

Now, immortal and eternally as young, handsome and charismatic as he was then, Mick is disgusted with Coraline and other vampires who view humans merely as a source of nourishment. So instead of feeding on humans, Mick uses his acute supernatural senses to help them out. With only a handful of undead confidants for company, Mick fills his infinite days protecting the living. But one night, years ago, a single act of kindness changed Mick when he saved a young girl's life, making him want to be a better vampire. Now their paths cross again, and Mick develops a distinctive bond with Beth Turner (Sophia Myles), who has grown into a beautiful, ambitious investigative reporter. Mick knows he can't pursue Beth without exposing the part of him that would make him a monster in her eyes.

"Every vampire in this show is based on some amount of emotional truth," O'Loughlin says. "That's what really drew me to this script in the first place: telling the dramatic human stories that we all struggle with every day, as opposed to just being this fantasy about people with sharp teeth who drink blood."

QA & Alex O'Loughlin

Watch! You're a vampire—what are your good points?

Alex O'Loughlin: I'm a reluctant vampire. You forgot the word reluctant. My character, Mick St. John, was given this gift/curse; he didn't ask for it and he's pretty sure he doesn't want it. But he has reached a level of acceptance where he realizes this is his cross to bear. He can either sit around and mope or he can do something with it. So he becomes a private investigator and therefore uses his powers for good. Essentially he's a humanist. He may be brooding and he may be pissed at the fact that he has to ingest blood every day, but he also struggles constantly with the sight of the human condition and is appalled by the things we do to each other.

W: What has been the biggest challenge in playing Mick?

AO: Well in the flashbacks to 1947 we see that Mick is a trumpet soloist in a jazz band. So I actually learned to play the trumpet for this role. I'm very proud of myself. I play terribly—in fact,

to paraphrase Billy Connolly, my trumpeting sounds like a goose farting in the fog. But I hit the notes eventually.

W: Is Mick an American vampire or like you, an Aussie?

AO: He's an American. And even though I'm always going to be an Aussie, I just don't think having Mick walk up to someone in the first episode and say, "G'day!" would go down so well.

W: Have you ever played a vampire before?

AO: No, but I've always wanted to. I've really loved and struggled with the concepts of immortality and infinity. I also read Anne Rice's vampire chronicles and movies like *The Lost Boys* were pivotal for my coming-of-age. I love the sexual, sensual, animalistic side of the vampire story, and the class and style of these creatures. There's such a potential for storytelling in the genre, and it doesn't have to be done in an over-the-top Hollywood way.



This eternally young vampire spends his nights protecting the living.