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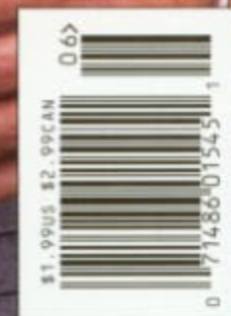
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## Sam Page

kicked off his acting career as a 'Stone Cold Fox Boy.' Now, this Princeton grad is working alongside James Woods and putting away the TV bad guys on the hit legal drama *Shark*

By Jim Colucci  
Photograph by  
Kevin Abosch



Swimming with the

# SHARK

ONE LOOK at *Shark*'s Sam Page, and you figure he's one of those actors who must have started out as a model. But actually, the 30-year-old actor says he has never had any interest in posing in front of a fashion photographer. "In front of a film camera I come alive," he explains. "But I can't stand being still for a photo. I don't like to stop."

Page began his rise to prime-time prominence in a Milwaukee suburb and proceeded to Princeton, where he played on the university's baseball team and received a bachelor's degree in ecology and evolutionary biology. But in 1998, with graduation looming, he decided to forgo the typical investment banking job offers his classmates were receiving and instead follow his true calling: acting.

## No Plan B

he youngest of three siblings, Page says his love of film had come about quite by accident. "There came a time when my two older sisters were no longer willing to babysit for the pittance that my parents would pay them," he remembers. "And I was a quiet, easygoing kid, so they would take me to the movies with their friends, and afterward I would be there at dinner while they analyzed." Page says the experience taught him "how to watch movies in a more interesting way," and sparked a passion he secretly indulged at college. "I

found myself sneaking off alone to the Cineplex when I probably should have been studying."

And so, that spring, when a friend mentioned that his actor brother in Los Angeles was looking for a roommate, Page impulsively abandoned plans to move to New York and headed west. As he began to take acting classes and struggled at first to pay each month's rent, he realized that he had moved to L.A. without a Plan B—and that's exactly how he wanted it.

"Before I moved, family and friends had asked me, 'Wow, how long are you going to give yourself out there?'" Page remembers. "And I kept answering, 'You're asking me what my plan for failure is? I just believed, and still do, that you can't do something if you have that safety behind you, because you'll let yourself fail. So I deliberately jumped in without a net.'"

Soon after, as he worked a day job at the front desk of a health club, Page landed his first job, a recurring role on the WB teen soap *Popular*. The series' lead role had been his first audition—and he hadn't nailed it. But the neophyte had so impressed the show's creator, Ryan Murphy (now of FX's *Nip/Tuck*), that Page fittingly was cast as a recurring character known only as "Stone Cold Fox Boy."

Page continued to grow his résumé, with a couple of independent film roles and a recurring part on another WB series, *7th Heaven*. In 2002, he won the role of Trey Kenyon on ABC's *All My Children*, and despite initial reservations about the supposed stigma of being a soap opera actor, he jumped at the chance. "It was phenomenal," Page says about his time working on the show in New York. "I knew I had a lot of ground to make up, and I got to be there, working every day on the technical side of acting."

## Order in the Court

A self-professed "procedural law show junkie," Page was thrilled to land the part of naive young attorney Casey Woodland in the James Woods vehicle, which became a Thursday night hit in fall of 2006.

"I read the pilot script," Page remembers, "where Jimmy's character, Sebastian Stark, went around the table and sized everyone up. When he came to me, he said something like 'Richard Casey Woodland, son of State Senator Woodland, backup quarterback at USC, charming, good with the jury, lazy, not a rocket scientist.' And I loved it." It was just one paragraph, Page says, but it was "a nice jumping-off point, and gave me a lot to work with. I thought, Casey was born with a silver spoon in his mouth,



Sebastian Stark (James Woods) leads a team of hungry, young L.A. County prosecutors—including Casey Woodland (Sam Page)—in the drama *Shark*.

## PAGE TURNER

### Model Behavior

Since gaining attention on the WB show *Popular*, Sam Page has been named one of *People* magazine's Top 50 Bachelors and one of Daytime Drama's Hottest Men by *US Weekly*.

### Not Rocket Science

Page, who didn't indulge his secret desire to become an actor until after college, graduated from Princeton University with a B.A. in ecology and evolutionary biology. The longtime athlete also found time to play baseball for the Princeton Tigers.



### Out of Character

Page (above with Sarah Carter) plays L.A. deputy district attorney Casey Woodland on *Shark*. "His father is a well-known senator, so he comes from a very affluent background," Page says. "He's kind of like a JFK Jr."

but he's probably not in this office because this is what he wants to do. I imagine there's some kind of political office being held for him, and this is just the résumé builder to get there."

Still, viewers have already seen changes in the previously blasé Casey, as he can't help becoming torn between his father's ambitions for him and his father figure Stark's passion for justice.

Similarly, Page says, it's easy to get caught up in series star Woods' passion for acting. "He brings all of his energy to every single take—even rehearsals," Page says. "He's incredibly generous, and whenever you have a question, you just go to Jimmy. If it's a little technical thing, like 'I feel like I'm crossing my arms too much or have my hands in my pockets,' he'll have 10 different suggestions for you, all of which are gold."

Page remembers how, soon after meeting Woods, the actor told him a story about working on the film *Once Upon a Time in America* with Robert De Niro. "De Niro did something along the lines of paying out of his own pocket a couple of thousand dollars for some fake teeth for Jimmy to use for his character. And when Jimmy asked him why he did it, he said, 'Because I don't think I can be great unless you're great.' And that's the way Jimmy works, too."

As he continues to learn on the job, Page says he expects fun story lines to come for Casey; but understanding that the procedural law format requires him instead often to carry a lot of expository dialogue, he says he's willing to bide his time to let it all play out. Besides, in the meanwhile, he gets to have an office romance with Sarah Carter's character, Madeleine, and even live out most men's fantasy: Recently, when an episode came in four minutes too short, Casey got to be alone in a newly written scene with costar Jeri Ryan, of sexy *Star Trek* Seven of Nine fame.

For now, with Page's success has come a new apartment in West Hollywood—not necessarily bigger than the one he lived in before, but with a grassy backyard, so that Page, who grew up with golden retrievers, could get a new puppy. Currently single, he jokes that "she'll be the only girl in my life," but he laughs as he acknowledges that "walking around with a golden retriever puppy, that can change things pretty quickly." ■