

The Observer

From the files of Project Quantum Leap

Issue #23

January 2001



Tenth Anniversary Issue: 1991 - 2001

Featuring exclusive interviews with
Donald P. Bellisario and
Deborah Pratt!

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Happy Anniversary PQL

I've always liked to think that Don gave *Quantum Leap* it's heart and Deborah provided it's soul. Which is to say, Deborah and Don brought components to *QL* that precisely complemented each other, and without both of them *Quantum Leap* might never have meant so much to any of us.

Thank you Don and Deborah. To honor the gift you have given us, I have tried to make this Anniversary Issue an extra-special one for our readers. -SAM

IndyLeap 2000

The final *Quantum Leap* convention of the second millenium was held July 28-30 at the Holiday Inn in Indianapolis, Indiana. Organizers Jeanne Koenig and Dawn Geraghty worked very hard to make this a memorable, and highly successful, weekend. Attendees came from all over the U.S. and met with Leapers from Canada, England and Germany. Our favorite guest star, John D'Aquino, entertained the group with a funny and interesting story of his recent experience filming a movie in Italy, *The Count of Melissa*.

Michael Stern, who is now working on the WB series *Angel*, also appeared at IndyLeap, giving fascinating insight into the world of TV editing. Check out a transcript of his Q&A on page 22 of this issue.

Both John and Michael hosted the Charity Brunch on Sunday, and with the very successful Charity Auction on Saturday afternoon, close to \$4000 was raised for the Damien House in Indianapolis.

Special unexpected features of the IndyLeap agenda included a first-ever public screening of *Prowler*, the BPI pilot filmed for CBS in 1995; *Above Suspicion*, a telefilm starring Scott that had yet to air in the USA; and *Nite Club Confidential*, a video of Scott's L.A. theater debut in 1986. Add to that, encore presentations of *Quantum Leap* and behind-the-scenes footage; early films from Dean Stockwell's career; and *Luminarias*, the recent independent film featuring Scott, it became a veritable film festival for Leapers.

The biggest hit of the Con however was a half-hour phone chat between Scott and the attendees. Graciously taking time from his niece's birthday party, Scott gave great answers to great questions. See the transcript beginning on page 17 of this issue.

Many, many thanks to Jeanne and Dawn for once again bringing us home to IndyLeap. I know they said it was their last one, but of anyone, Leapers know better than to ever say "never."

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SHORT BIO FOR DON BELLISARIO

by Sharon Major



A prolific writer, Donald P. Bellisario has been crafting words and stories for a variety of readers and audiences for more than 30 years. In 1961, armed with a degree in journalism from Penn State University, he began his writing career as a copywriter for a small advertising agency in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Three years later, he moved to Dallas to take a prestigious copy position at the famous Bloom Agency. By 1976, after eight years at Bloom, Bellisario had risen to the level of senior vice president, creative director and member of the board of directors. Yet he was still eager to gamble on a new career.

Moving to Hollywood, he became a story editor on the 1976-1978 series *Baa, Baa, Black Sheep*. After just five episodes, he was promoted to producer, a position he held for one year. He then became supervising producer on *Battlestar Galactica*. Subsequently, he began to develop his own series.

Bellisario, as head of Belisarius Productions, brought his signature storytelling to one-hour television and is best known for his creations *Magnum, P.I.* and *Quantum Leap*. Running from 1980-1988, *Magnum, P.I.* starred Tom Selleck. Among other honors, Bellisario's work on the series won him an Edgar Allen Poe writing award. *Quantum Leap*, the 1989-1993 science-fiction drama starring Scott Bakula, garnered four Emmy nominations for Best Drama series.

Bellisario's other creator/executive producer credits include *Tales of the Gold Monkey*, *Airwolf*, and *Tequila and Bonetti*. Bellisario also wrote, produced and directed the 1987 feature film *Last Rites*, and was executive producer on Paramount's 1995 detective telefilm *Crowfoot*.

Don's CBS award-winning dramatic adventure series *JAG*, now in its sixth season, is a formidable challenger in its timeslot, coming in a close second in ratings and key demographics. *JAG* is seen in 90 countries and a Top 10 series in Australia, and to celebrate it's 100th episode last season, *JAG* filmed on location in Sydney, Australia. Don tells us: "Dramatic, action adventure programming has all but disappeared from the airwaves. I don't do sitcoms; I don't do urban neurotic dramas. I created *JAG* because it's the kind of television I like to watch. Besides that, I served four years in the Marine corps and remain fascinated by the military's code of ethics—God, duty, honor, country—and how, in these rapidly-changing times, it still survives. That's what Harm and Mac, and *JAG* as a whole, represent."

As if a hit series isn't enough, CBS has given Bellisario a pilot commitment for *First Monday*, to be developed for the 2001-02 season. Bellisario is set to direct the pilot and co-create the series with novelist Paul Levine (the Jake Lassiter mystery series), who is also the executive story editor on *JAG*. The show is described as an effort to "lift the red velvet curtains" of the U.S. Supreme Court, focusing on the lives and the high-pressure work of the justices and the law clerks who serve on the nation's highest court.

Don enjoys spending time with his seven children, flying helicopters and golfing. He and his Australian wife Vivienne reside in Los Angeles.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DON BELLISARIO

January 10, 2001

by Karen Funk Blocher

Dear Leapers,

Congratulations on the 10th Anniversary issue of *The Observer*. It's lasted longer than the show, which is an outstanding accomplishment. I hope, as I know you do, that at some time in the not too distant future, Sam will come leaping back on the big screen. 'Til then, keep the faith.

Don

Hi again. This is Harriet. Karen Blocher had asked Don to answer questions about the series. Well, we did it! It's really a sign of Don's affection for the *QL* fans that he wanted so much to be a part of this celebration. Herewith the questions and his answers:

Karen: When you first pitched *Quantum Leap*, did you have a clear idea of the "Bellisario Rules of Quantum Leaping?" Did you feel you had to revise or bend the rules as you went along, and if so, in what ways?

Don: All the rules were formulated by the time we shot the pilot. To me, the most important rule was that Sam leaped into a body that existed within his own lifetime. I did this so that the stories would be more believable, especially visually. Leaping during the 1950's meant that it would be easier to recognize objects, such as autos, wardrobe and so on, thus adding a touch of reality to the transition.

The second most important rule was that when Sam leaped into someone, the audience saw him as himself, but the episode characters saw him as the person he leaped into. And the only way Sam saw himself as that person was by looking into a mirror. That's also how the audience was able to view the character—by way of the Mirror Image.

"Kisses with history," which we were not able to do in every episode, were also a big plus to the show.

The first breaking of the rules came about when Sam and Al swapped places and we were able to leap back into the 1940's, which was within Al's lifetime. The only other rule-breaking occurred in the "Lee Harvey Oswald" episode. I did that by coming up with a way of changing history that would be believable, specifically by saving Jackie's life.

Karen: Do you have any regrets about Sam interacting with Oswald, Elvis, Dr. Ruth and Marilyn Monroe in the last season of *QL*?

Don: No.

Karen: In "Mirror Image," did any of the World War II pictures come from your personal collection?

Don: The bar in the episode was a recreation of my Dad's bar in Cokeburg within 90% of reality. The bar taps were the original ones I kept, the photos were mine, and in fact, I cast Bruce McGill because, while he was slightly shorter than my father, he could've been his 'mirror image.' The original photos of my Dad even looked as if Bruce might have posed for them.

(Note from Harriet: If you look closely at the bar scenes, you can see Don portraying one of the miners.)



Don's great imagination and love of adventure began when he was a child.

A Letter from Harriet Margulies



January 2001

Hi, this is Harriet,

It's *deja vu* all over again, as Yogi Bear once said. I have to thank the editors for letting me relive those heady Leap days by addressing the Leapers one more time.

Whenever I'm asked if *Quantum Leap* will ever come back, I usually answer, "Probably not. It was a moment in time, like Camelot, never to return." Of course, we're still hoping for a movie, you just never know. Universal, the copyright owner of the series, has undergone two major changes since *QL* wrapped in 1993: first, Seagram Liquor bought the studio, dismantled UTV, selling what was still airing to the Home Shopping Network, which redubbed it USA Films. Now the French company Vivendi owns the rest, which I'm assuming, includes the syndication arm of the old MCA. (And you thought the last presidential election was complicated!)

By the way, hope springs eternal, to coin a cliché, because much earlier Universal sold the rights to *Tequila and Bonetti* to an Italian production company, which is filming a new series starring Jack Scalia. Could a French *QL* be far behind?

Every time Don Bellisario left Universal to pursue other projects, a feature film, etc., he asked me to go with him. Since I was putting in the requisite 20 years to be vested in the Motion Picture Pension Plan, with complete medical coverage included, I couldn't leave. And then, the good news-bad news: in essence, my job was sold, but by then, I was fully vested. In the meantime, DPB had created *JAG* for NBC, which cancelled it after one season. (Feeling a little *deja vu*?) CBS scooped it up, and asked Don to include more personal stories in their version of the series.

I tuned in to the *JAG* episode "Ghost Ship" and was touched and surprised to see a beautiful blonde actress playing the part of Harriet, the lovable character Don created for CBS. Then I heard the names of DPB's old friends from Cokeburg: Sibby LoNigro and Andy Kochifos (characters who appeared in *QL*, too.) The episode was dedicated to David Jones, our wonderful stunt pilot who had recently passed away. I was flooded by tears and memories, and called Don to say I had to come by and give him a big hug. It had been at least five years, but it was like we spoke yesterday.

Timing is everything, to coin another cliché. I walked into Don's Paramount office, and right behind me, David Bellisario came in to announce that *JAG* writer Dana Coen had written a *QL* Convention into the next episode, "Father's Day." "Harriet has to be in it," Don told him, without missing a beat. And so I was, with DPB and all the L.A. Leapers I could find on short notice. "You have to work on the show," Don whispered and I didn't miss a beat, either, in accepting. I was finally free to say "yes" to an offer I couldn't refuse.

How incredibly sweet and loyal it was of Don to give me another lease on a working life. The "*JAG*niks" are reminiscent of the Leapers, but you and I have the luxury of shared memories. Remember picketing NBC in Burbank, when the network cancelled the show; the conventions that were so much fun; the Viewers for Quality Television annual dinners, and the memorable night the Leapers bought me my own table? (I spoke to Dorothy Swanson (VQT chairwoman) recently, and she's just published a book, which she told me mentions me by name!) I remember all the tapes and pictures you've sent me. Someday, I'll have enough time to look at them, but not too soon, I hope.

QL is alive and well at Paramount. I work closely with Co-Exec. Producer Chas. Floyd Johnson. Richard Herd ("Future Boy") stopped by my office; Stunt Coordinator Diamond Farnsworth, Prop Master George Tuers, Transportation Coordinator Dick White (who am I leaving out?) wave when I visit the set. John D'Aquino, Jeff MacKay, Harrison Page (who am I leaving out?), directors Alan Levi, Jimmy Whitmore. We've all made the Leap, thanks to someone who never forgot us—Donald P. Bellisario, whose loyalty to his old friends speaks for itself. And Don hasn't forgotten the Leapers; not too long ago, he was interviewed for a *QL* documentary produced for the Sci-Fi channel. I hope you got to see it.

When I came to Paramount that first time, I quipped, "What, you're only doing one series?" Never underestimate DPB; he's now in pre-production for the pilot of *First Monday*, based on the Supreme Court.

The friends I made, their loyalty and many kindness' to me, I call that The Legacy of the Leap. My heartfelt thanks to all of you.

With much affection,

Harriet

SHORT BIO FOR DEBORAH PRATT

by Sharon Major



Deborah Pratt, having already done it all, is eagerly embarking on something that has never been done before!

Originally from Chicago, Deborah earned a degree in Psychology from Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri. Attending the Loretto-Hilton Conservatory, Deborah merged her undergraduate studies with her love of performing arts into a thesis called, "The Importance of Psycho-drama for Expression in Children."

She then went to California seeking career opportunities as a performer. From a pool of 500 women, she won a part in Dean Martin's "Golddiggers"—a troupe of vibrant young singer/dancers. After doing Vegas tours, recording albums and touring Europe, Deborah returned to

L.A. to pursue an acting career. She quickly realized the roles she wanted didn't seem to exist.

With a natural story-telling ability, she turned to script writing, getting work on *Magnum P.I.* and *Airwolf*, and then in 1989, becoming a producer on *Quantum Leap*, while still managing to write 20 of *QL's* 97 scripts. Winning numerous awards for both writing and producing, she then went on to co-create and be executive producer for *The Net* on the USA Network.

Highly sought after as a television creator/producer, Deborah had other ideas in mind. Taking up the camera in 1996, she directed a short film called *Girlfriends*, which she also wrote and produced. Recently she directed her first full-length feature, the PBS Masterpiece Theatre production of Langston Hughes' *Cora Unashamed*. The October 2000 airing brought in PBS's highest rating for a dramatic movie.

Deborah's current projects for her company, Visionary Communications include developing a television series for Paramount, called *Arch Angel*, and a Broadway musical, *Shadow Dance*, for which she wrote the music and lyrics (and which she eventually hopes to take to the big screen).

However, Deborah's consuming passion right now is her interactive website, VMGN.com (Visionary Media Global Network), which will deliver a brand-new kind of entertainment. By bringing to the internet a story concept that has always been in the back of her mind, she is hoping to by-pass the 'old-school' network of television executives and advertisers, and provide her audience with an action/adventure series that "Leapers will appreciate big-time!" Launch date for VMGN.com is February 14, 2001, with "episodes" of *The Vision Quest* arriving in the Spring.

SPECIAL FEATURE

AN INTERVIEW WITH DEBORAH PRATT

by Sharon Major

When I first contacted Deborah Pratt for an interview, I was under the impression that *Cora Unashamed* was her directorial debut. She quickly informed me that in 1996 she had a chance to direct a short film for The American Film Institute's prestigious Women's Directing Program. The half-hour film, *Girlfriends*—which Deborah also wrote and produced—won critical praise and awards on the festival circuit, including the 1997 Black Filmmaker's Hall of Fame for best short film. Marian Rees (Executive producer of *Cora Unashamed*, the Hallmark Hall of Fame series, and recently *Papa's Angels*) was moved to tears by *Girlfriends*, something Rees never expected from such a short film.

Within a few days I found a copy of *Girlfriends* delivered to my door and so I was able to discuss it during the following interview. The cast and crew credits for *Girlfriends* look like a *QL* alumni reunion guest list, and the film's moving short story makes it an obvious choice for screening at 2001 Orlando Leap. On my recommendation, and with Deborah's permission, Jo Fox readily agreed.

Appearing in the film are Melora Hardin and Susan French; Ray Bunch and Bruce Frazier worked on the musical score; Jean Pierre Dorleac handled the costumes; and Robert Zilliox worked on Production Design. Nicholas and Troian, Deborah's children, made a very brief appearance, and Deborah's sister, Deirdre A. Pratt was co-producer.

I hope everyone attending Orlando Leap will make an effort to include *Girlfriends* on their dance cards.

INTERVIEW WITH DEBORAH PRATT

November 2000

Transcribed by Trudy Costagliola

Screen captures by Billie Mason

Sharon: Thank you so much for sending me the tape of *Girlfriends*.

Deborah: It was my pleasure.

S: It was a surprise to see so many familiar names and faces.

Deb: It's always a pleasure to go back to family.

S: As for *Girlfriends*, in a very short time I came to care for your characters, but I was also disturbed by the brutality of some of the scenes. I realize how thankful I am to live in a time and place that writers and filmmakers can speak about such "unspeakable crimes" and etch those images vividly into our minds.



Britney Nicole Mitchell (left) and Brighton Hertford [as Mattie Tatum and Nadine Palmer] make a 'heart-swear' promise in *Girlfriends*

Deb: I try to balance the responsibility I hold as a filmmaker in depicting the truth, while protecting the viewer. I feel strongly that once we see an image it is forever ingrained in our minds.

I originally wanted to make *Girlfriends* into a full-length feature, and the saddest lesson I learned was finding out how many people (mostly men) would rather hide their faces than show the brutality to which so many women are subjected on a daily basis.

S: Production schedules and editing can go a long way in not exposing young actors to the brutal scenes portrayed in a film. In the case of Nicholas and Troian, perhaps they wouldn't have to know the full scope of the scene in which they would be appearing.

Deb: I only got two takes on the scene, which ended with the camera on Nick and Troian. Nick didn't like what he saw and wouldn't do the scene again.



Nicholas and Troian Pratt-Bellisario in *Girlfriends*

S: Yet for your two principal young actresses, it seems essential that Brittany Mitchell and Brighton Hertford would have to be fully aware of the details of the script. As a director (and a mother), how do you prepare youngsters to work with this sort of material?

Deb: They didn't see me shoot that scene either. However, I do recall in the *QL* episode "Dreams," it was written that one of the two children was to witness their mother being garroted and then hide in the aftermath. I remember coming down to the set and seeing this woman lying in a huge pool of blood with a Tom More{?} covering her. It dawned on me that that there were two young kids in the scene. Before they were brought out, I sat them down and apologized for what they were about to see. Then I took them on the set. Their response was "Whoa, cool! Great special effects!" and they proceeded to ask a thousand questions about the technical side.

S: Do you feel that direction was simply a natural progression from producing?

Deb: I had been wanting to direct but it seemed every time I was supposed to direct a *Quantum* episode—which was the safest world I could step into—some script fell apart or some show needed to be re-cut or something. It was really a dream of mine, but I just never got to do it. Then suddenly *Quantum* was gone and I ended up going back to AFI and doing *Girlfriends*.

S: Were you a little nervous about doing *Cora*?

Deb: Well, in one sense all the years of producing were a huge help, and all of the years of acting was an amazing help. It was as if everything that I had done in my twenty-plus years of show business suddenly came to culmination. I could sit down and talk to actors because I knew how. I understood budget

concerns and costs and making a day, {'making a day' means finishing everything on the shooting schedule, so that cost over-runs are minimized} because I'd been on the other side of that page too. When it came to music, I had been in the music business for years. So I really knew tricks of the trade to take this very small budget and very grand period piece, covering sixteen years of this woman's life and tell the story. I think I was a little bit afraid, having only done the one short film, *Girlfriends*. *Cora* was a huge job and I'm very grateful I had Marion Rees and Anne Hopkins in my corner, that's for sure. I was prepared; I walked on that set every day with three pages of shot lists—the set-ups I needed to tell my story and the blocking that I wanted. Yes, I had to go with the flow when the actors came in and they couldn't get what we needed, but at the same time we made our day almost every day.

S: In *Behind the Scenes for Cora*, your comment that working "on a period piece...is the closest thing we have to time travel" made me smile. Do you think you were sought out for this project partly because of your work on *QL*?

Deb: Actually, *Cora* came along as one of those great flukes of life. I think, because *Girlfriends* dealt with interracial kids who were friends and it told a deeply emotional story without letting the elements of race get in the way, it was a great precursor to *Cora*. Marion Rees, the producer for *Cora*, saw *Girlfriends* and knew that I understood that kind of story.

S: What was your budget on *Cora*?

Deb: \$2.6 million, and there's a lot on the screen for that 2.6

S: Just the costumes alone were unbelievable. {In the *Behind the Scenes*, Costume Designer Karyn Wagner mentions that perhaps 400-500 complete outfits, spanning two decades, were used in the film. Wagner says Deborah had specific ideas for her characters and chose "a very warm palette for Cora" and "cold, icy colors" for Cora's employer, Mrs. Studevant.}

S: Part of the authenticity of the piece came from being filmed entirely in Iowa. How long were you actually there, and did you bring the kids along on location with you?

Deb: Iowa was great, and I did bring the kids on location. We were working so fast. I got there in late September and essentially had only a few weeks to prep because I came in kind of late on the scene. I had to make all the decisions, fly to New York to do casting

and fly back to Iowa to pick locations. Then once we started shooting, we were there for three weeks. We had nineteen or twenty days to shoot the piece. We had one weekend off, so I flew the kids in from L.A. We ended up having to work that Saturday, but the kids were great about it. Nicholas crawled behind the camera and did some shots. Troian watched, but she's been on sets all her life. They were both very supportive. They're great kids. We hung out that Sunday, drove around and watched the leaves turn gold and orange, and it was quite beautiful. The people in Iowa were incredible. I don't think we could have made it anywhere else, because they wanted so much to support this world. They came through for us. There was a car club that, for a very reasonable amount, let us use cars from 1915 and 1918; these were phenomenal vehicles. It helped to make it very authentic. We had a great crew—a great crew!—who really appreciated the details of the time. So it was wonderful, and I had a good time.



Deborah directing on the set of *Cora*

S: Did you know that Marion Rees and Anne Hopkins were involved in co-producing *Papa's Angels* with Scott Bakula? Is that a coincidence?

Deb: Yes, but I don't know which came first—the chicken or the egg. They were certainly fans of *Quantum Leap* or knew of it. I don't know if Scott brought them the project, or if they had gone to him for it. It was about two or three weeks after they hired me, that they told me about this project, but I never asked them if it had anything to do with the fact that I know Scott Bakula. I said, "Of course you know that you're working with a jewel of a guy!" Scott ended up pulling in Ray Bunch to do all the music. I think *Papa's Angels* is going to be good.

S: You were just in New York. How was it, and was it a pleasure trip?

Deb: New York was great. The weather was terrific and the people were (laughing) New Yorkers! <g> I had a good time. Actually I was there because I'm doing a website. I think I've talked forever about this action/adventure series that I've always wanted to do. I've decided not to give it to television or film but to create a world and a home for it right on the website, which we're hoping to launch this January. The site is called VMGN.com and the series is called *The Vision Quest*. It's quite a project with a lot of good things attached to it. I think the Leapers will appreciate this big-time.

S: How does this work?

D: There are a lot of different elements to it. There is a wonderful difference between passive entertainment vs. interactive entertainment. *Quantum Leap* is passive entertainment: You sit back and watch and your interaction is emotional; how you enjoy the show or how it affects you. Interestingly enough, in 1993, when *Quantum* first sold to USA Network, I went to the network with an interactive concept. I wanted Ziggy to appear as the hand-link, in animated form, with my voice. At the beginning of each show, a question was asked about the episode, and the answer would be in the show. Once viewers got the answer they would pick up the phone and dial the given number. Viewers with the correct answer might win a *Quantum Leap* CD, or maybe a *Quantum Leap* T-shirt or hat, or something. But USA just didn't get it. I guess I was way ahead of my time because it was like enhanced interactive viewing. I remember the one episode that we picked to show them was the one where Sam leapt into the boxer. ["The Right Hand of God"] and the question was "What action saved Sam in the end?" And the answer was that the girl "streaked" during the middle of the fight, which made the fighter turn his head and Sam was then able to knock him out. Streaking was very specific to that time. Where did Sam get the idea? The idea came to Sam as he watching the news about a guy who streaked across a famous baseball game. That was my first attempt at interactivity and I thought this was very cool. When I did *The Net* for USA Network I wanted it to be very interactive—on-line in a Chat Room. Here was a (perfect) opportunity, since we were doing a show called *The Net!* Three years ago I was banging on Sony Columbia Tri-Star's door to let me do, what people are doing now.

S: My feeling is that this should really run right after the show, because people that are actually watching the

show, want to finish watching. Don't you feel that it interferes if they are drawn to their computer?

Deb: In one sense no, because eventually what will happen is that your computer will be your television. You can do more than one thing at a time. You may eat while you watch TV, you may talk on the phone to somebody while you watch TV. We are all evolving into multi-taskers.

S (jokingly): Does this come about from learning to do your homework while watching TV?

Deb: [laughing] That's probably very true, although my mother would not allow that! When I watch TV, I'm zoned in, but with a show that a person may have seen two, three or four times, it might be fun to take it to another level. With a first-run show, then yes, you get on-line and deal with it afterwards. We're designing the series *The Vision Quest* to be very short episodes, because of the download time and file-size restriction, but they are full out action/adventure. Even though the show is fiction, there are elements based on fact. At the end of the show you can come on-line and talk to the people whose facts are being discussed in each episode. At the same time you can switch over and look at old episodes, play games or gain points based on information that you gather. It's a very different way of entertainment.

It's funny that in one of your possible questions you asked if doing all these game shows might be strangling comedy and drama on television. I think yes, television is killing itself! Maybe it's cheaper to do game shows, but people are eventually going to go for entertainment. How many game shows can you watch? People need variety.

S: Is this mostly done in graphics, or is it going to be live-action?

Deb: It's mostly done in an animation style that I'm actually creating for the Internet. You would find that taking animation *per se* and adapting it to the Internet is very stagnant. If we can pull it off, I've come up with a concept that has not been seen before. Yet at the same time, it's classic story-telling with heroes and villains and all that kind of good stuff. The series probably won't begin until March or April, but once we have an actual launch date for the site, people can come in and learn about it—the world and the characters, me and the other creators.

S: From comments you've made at *QL* conventions, it seems that you've had the idea for this adventure in the back of your mind for a long time, didn't you?

Deb: For about 25 years...

S: Over the course of many PQL interviews and conventions, you've talked to some extent about each of the episodes that you wrote for *Quantum Leap*. I would now like to focus on another of your stories, *Trilogy*. Not only was it one of my all-time favorites, but it also received the most votes from our membership for the best episode for the fifth season, and helped to earn you the Best Writer for that season from our readers.

You've said you had the idea for this story for a long time, but it took several seasons for you to actually get it on board. How developed in your mind was that whole concept before you brought it in on the fifth season?

Deb: Well, I knew that I wanted Sam to leap into this woman's life at three separate times during her lifetime. I knew where I wanted it to take place, how he affected her, and why he needed to be brought back to the same situation—he just wasn't finished. It took a long time for it to gel, and then because it was three hours of writing, it took a while to write. Writing it, in-between producing, probably took me about four months. I'm sure if I had just had the opportunity to sit down to write, it wouldn't have taken so long.

S: There are just so many details about *Trilogy* that I find unique and amazing. The episode won accolades from the Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists for its positive and respectful portrayal of stuttering, first by Travis Fine and then by Scott. At what point in script development did this aspect of Will Kinman's character come into being?

Deb: Again, I loved the fact that *Quantum Leap* allowed Scott to explore his talent as an actor and I loved the fact that he was so talented and diverse. I would just sit with him sometimes at lunch and say, "Tell me about growing up." I would take note of anything that he told me, for instance, how he liked baseball, or how he loved ice skating. I tried so hard for two years to do a hockey show. He could sing and play the piano. Anything that he said he could do, we would try and bring to the table for him. Scott always liked the challenge of trying something new. I used the stuttering as a distinctive element for the character of the child so that the viewer would catch it

immediately when they saw him as a grown man—an instant connection between the two. I didn't have to go back and explain a lot. Scott was wonderful. I also like the idea of making people as real as I can make them; there are people with speech impediments out there.

S: Now tell me about that leap-in for *Trilogy II*. It's certainly, shall we say, a compromising one for Sam.

Deb: [laughing] Okay, that was just one of those dreams—a suppressed fantasy all women would have—but what a wonderful fantasy.

S (half-jokingly): It's my rational that GTFW must have leaped Sam in at that moment because He knew it would take Sam considerably longer to get there by himself, and consequently, Sammy Jo must somehow fit into the "master plan."

Deb: [laughing] We were very protective of Sam that way. I think it kept him very special.

S: Oh yes. Some fans are very adamant about Sam's involvement. They are uncomfortable with the idea that Sam has a child with someone other than Donna.

Deb: Yes, because they're possessive in that sense. I just thought it was one of those things where he was there and it happened to him. Sometimes he was a pawn of fate!

S: I just thought, he must have been put there for a reason.

Deb: It was in the back of my mind. I had pitched Don an idea that I wanted to do as a film. Sam had a child that was in the future who knew about him. In my mind Sammy Jo ended up at the facility working to bring her father home. At one point, she had the opportunity to go get him, but when she does, they both end up in the future. I thought the idea of Sammy Jo going after Sam was a neat twist. Since she had met him once before, when she found out the truth that they were connected, she really wanted to go and get him home. So in a way Sam had Sammy Jo in order to get him home.

S: I think that was definitely brought out in *Trilogy*.

Deb: [laughing] So you see what I was setting up!

S: What was Don's input on Sammy Jo? Was he quite comfortable with that character?

Deb: He was very supportive of what I brought to the table. In a sense he knew how much of the show was mine from the very beginning. This was a huge vision for me, and I don't think I've even finished with it. I was very angry, as I'm sure a lot of people were, when NBC pulled the plug. I wasn't going to go back to television because I find it stifling in a lot of ways. I've been looking for something really special to do, but people have said, "No, no, no, no" to most of the stuff I've been pitching. Then Paramount asked, "Can you do something kind of *Quantum Leapish*?" I said, "I can't go back to *Quantum Leap*, but I love the idea of a person being in a new situation each week—a kind of anthology, but it's not." So I pitched them an idea and they bought it in the room. It's called *Arch Angel* and although it's not *Quantum Leap*, it's probably as close to *QL* as I would come with a new TV series. I hope it makes it on the air next Fall; I think it is a very special piece.

S: So is Paramount going to do a pilot for you?

Deb: Well, keep your fingers crossed. I'm writing the script for it now.

S: I would honestly love to see anything that you've written. In fact, I'm hoping that if a *Quantum Leap* feature or TV movie comes along, you and Don will both be there. I assume Don would write it, but it's my hope that you would be working on it too. Do you get that feeling?

Deb: No. But you never can tell.

S: Do you think Don would ever "erase" something—like Sammy Jo—from the mythology, or perhaps move *QL* in another direction?

Deb: I've never heard him say anything like that. I think the show is what it is. It was a very well received, very highly respected show and I don't think the fans would let him. I mean you guys have a huge amount of power. Once something is created, it's very hard to un-create it.

S: At one time, you mentioned you were writing a children's book. After watching *Girlfriends*, it's quite apparent that if you ever do have a children's book published it won't be a sugarcoated fairytale.

Deb: That's the truth.

S: Any chance of future publications?

Deb: Not at this point. When I wrote the story the first time, back in 1993, someone was interested in it as an animated musical and we started developing it in that way. Then I pulled back, and thought I'd really like to explore this as a children's book. As I started to write it, it just kept getting more dense, and I couldn't write the simple little children's book I wanted to write. I felt there was a great opportunity to explore the magic within all of us. This is why *The Vision Quest*, and even *Arch Angel*, are such important projects to me. We are very powerful beings, but our power has been suppressed by society, religion, and in all different kinds of ways. We've lost our magic! I think there is room at this point to create new mythologies. Maybe because I have a young son, I find that although it's a man's world, there is nothing specific in our society that allows them to become men. There is no rite of passage and the result is that a lot of men aren't—they're little boys. They don't have to grow up so they don't. Women in a sense have to grow up when they have babies. [laughing] That will make you grow up really fast! The Jewish religion may have the last vestige of a rite of passage with the Bar Mitzvah, in which society recognizes the transition from being a boy to becoming a man.

I'm also trying to tell stories in which women are respected and are able to take care of and fend for themselves. That's not to say that we become Amazons. I've written a couple of action/adventure pieces and essentially people have said "No, no, no. This is where the guy has to come in and save her." I said, "You know what, Prince Charming doesn't always come." So when he doesn't, what should we teach our girls to do? If you get captured by a serial killer, you have to start thinking, how do I get away; how am I smarter; how am I stronger? These are the things we don't teach our young girls. We live in a society, especially in Third World countries, where it's the right of a man to beat his wife because he owns her. We have to stop teaching that! No one has the right to hurt another person. A lot of women give up that right because they are so afraid of the situations they are in. They should at least have options to walk away, to start their lives over, or to fight back. In truth, even our judicial system doesn't protect us. In some cases women who finally defend themselves and end up killing the person abusing them, may go to prison for murder. It's not being looked at as twenty years of suppression. So I'm trying to empower young men and women in some of my stories. I think that is part of my gift, and it's what I enjoyed so much in *Quantum Leap*. People were empowered when Sam came into their lives; he changed things in a way they couldn't do

for themselves, and when he left they had a better life. In a lot of ways we miss a beat by falling into the parameters that society has set upon us. We need to think outside the box.

Another thing that was so inspiring for me when writing for *Quantum Leap* was that we never told the audience what to think. We gave them two paths that could be chosen. We respected their intelligence enough in order to let them figure it out. I don't see enough of that on TV. When dealing with right and wrong, we're often told what to think and how to feel, instead of judging it for ourselves. Free will is one of the big issues I deal with in my new series. We have the free will to choose the right thing and my question is "How often do we choose it and how often do we not?" When we stand at the crossroad and must choose to do the right thing, do we?

S: How is your newest project *Shadow Dance* coming?

Deb: (gleefully) *Shadow Dance* is my musical. As it stands right now, I wrote all the music and all the lyrics. It is in New York with producers right now, and I have a meeting about it this week. They're trying to test talent and it's very hard because it's a breakout-in-song feature-film musical. We're looking at Broadway now, but I've always envisioned it being done both on stage and on film. But which place first? I'm moving it out in both directions and leaving it to the fates. It's been a long process.

S: Do you have a theatre?

Deb: No, not yet. We're just seeing if they're going to put money up for us. There's also a studio that I'll be talking to on Friday. Some very interesting "name" people. If I get them, [laughing] I can probably get anything I want.

S: As a child, did you ever think or dream that you would one day be writing and producing your own musical?

Deb: When I think of how I played as a child, Barbie was always in danger. She was always on a cliff, she had to save Ken, or Ken had to save her, and they were always fighting monsters. I always had the imagination of living in these kind of fantasy adventures. I've also loved the idea of telling a story through a song, because I thought it was a marvelous way of communication, when done well.

S: Did you have dance classes when you were a child? Was this something your parents wanted?

Deb: I didn't have dance classes. There were minor things with instruments, but my mom and dad had four daughters to raise so there were just some things that fell through the cracks. It wasn't until my junior and senior years in high school that I got into some singing and some dancing. Then it wasn't until college that I started to explore it. I came from very straight parents. It was, "Get your degree, and if you really want to be good, get your Masters and your Ph.D. or MD." It was one of those kinds of families! Show business was like "Really?" [laughing]

S: Was the sort of career you have now a secret dream that you never told your parents about?

Deb: Yes, I think at about age thirteen the realization hit me that this was what I wanted to do. I remember a very clear, precise moment and then the goal was that I had to get to California or New York and do this. I then asked my parents, "Can I go now?" "No, you have to finish High School first." I had to suppress it because my parents were not supportive. They may have appreciated the Arts, but not for their children.

S: At least not as a way of earning a living.

Deb: Exactly! I worked on and off as an actor for three years in California before my mother stopped saying, "You know you could go back and get your teaching degree."

S: Are your parents still alive?

Deb: Daddy's gone, but Mother's still here.

S: Is Deirdre one of your sisters? Did your other sisters go on to be M.D.'s and Ph.D.'s, as your parents expected?

Deb: Deirdre is my baby sister. My older sister Donna is an endocrinologist, with thirty *in vitro* fertilization offices in New York and the Midwest. I'm doing a film with her about her medical adventures, ala *Doctors without Borders*. My other sister Diane has been in Washington, D.C. for about 20 years.

S: Would you like to tell us about any other community or charity involvement?

Deb: I still serve on the board of Mediascope. I think it's very important that people are aware of what their

children are watching. There are ramifications to the sex and violence. As I said earlier, once you see something, you can't un-see it. We should be responsible to that. It's a good organization and the studies are very effective. Their website is Mediascope.org

S: Do you think that the content ratings have had any effect on reducing violence?

Deb: I think it's a combination of things. It won't go away because it's such an integral part of telling the story. One time I turned in my piece and the executive said to me, "But he doesn't use a gun." I asked, "Wouldn't it be nice if he didn't have to use a gun?" When are we going to start considering the possibility that you don't always have a gun, and that there are other things that you can do to save your life. When do we get to use critical thinking? "No, no. He's got to have a gun!" For twenty minutes I was lectured on the importance of the guy being empowered by this gun. Oh, I wrote it their way, but I didn't give up on very many other things. I'm curious to see what it gives or what it takes to do it that way. I wanted to say to him, "You just had a new baby son. When are you going to start taking responsibility for the violence that children see on TV?" I never gave Nicholas a gun, but he still makes them out of sticks (because he sees them on TV.)

It is imperative for me to show a future with hope. This is one of the things I deal with in *The Vision Quest*. My dream is that, although there are bad things now and there are bad things out in the future, we as a collective consciousness can work toward the good things and be aware of the things that need to be done, so that we can make a better world. *The Vision Quest* takes place in Sangelino, in 2073, and it is a pretty cool place. There are bad guys and conflict, and it's not a Utopian society, but all in all, it's enlightened. There are no more countries, and religion has become a collective recognition of God and the universe.

Ed. note: Words cannot express how very grateful I am for the steadfast support Deborah has given Project Quantum Leap. I am eagerly looking forward to *The Vision Quest*, and I hope that our readers will be intrigued by its possibilities and mention it to their friends who might also have an interest some good new-fashioned storytelling. —SAM.

CATCHING UP WITH RAY BUNCH

December 7, 2000

by Sharon Major

Ray Bunch, music composer *extraordinaire* for *Quantum Leap*, gave *The Observer* an extensive interview in issue #19, Winter 1999. As most of Scott's fans will know, Ray Bunch was in charge of the music for the Bakula Productions recent television movie, *Papa's Angels*, which premiered on CBS on December 3, 2000. It seemed like the perfect time to get in touch with him once again. Ray, in spite of being in the process of moving his studio, most willingly gave me a short telephone interview later that week.

Sharon: Hi Ray.



Ray: Hi Sharon. How are you doing?

S: I'm fine. How have you been?

R: Oh, pretty well. Thank you.

S: Good! I'm glad you had a few minutes to give me for an interview. I wanted to tell you that I really enjoyed *Papa's Angels*.

R: Did you get to see it?

S: Oh, yes! Do you have to ask? [laughing]

R: [Laughing]. I thought it was a really great experience. I thought Scott was excellent.

S: I don't think it was overly sentimental, the way some reviewers stated.

R: Yes, it got kind of mixed reviews here too.

S: Well, I enjoyed it! It seems like it would have been fun to work on, especially with all the music.

R: It was really fun to work on. It was a long arduous process, but it was really fun. CBS advanced the air date by two weeks, virtually at the last moment, and it created a bit of havoc. But still, all in all, I thought it came off nicely.

S: You were involved with this from the beginning then, probably late Spring?

R: Scott and I actually started researching the music back in April. So that was my summer!

S: Did you work on the set with the musicians?

R: No. I didn't go on location. As you probably know, the filming was done north of Calgary in Canada, and I couldn't go. I am doing another series, and I was just buried here with work. So I opted not to go.

S: Were there some sessions back in Los Angeles?

R: We did all of the recording here, but the actual filming was all done up in Canada.

S: We had talked before about 'spotting sessions' and how the director and producer get involved. I was just wondering who worked with you on the spotting sessions?

R: This was a mass group effort, frankly. Because of the restrictive amount of time that we had to do this, we took a look at the picture before it was really finished. Besides Scott and myself, the group included the director, Dwight Little, and the producers, Marian Rees, Anne Hopkins and Tom Spiroff. All of us were involved in that initial spotting session. We sat around and looked at what was, in essence, a rough-cut. It gave me an idea so that I could get started in writing the music. It was such a last minute thing, I just felt I had to do it (this way). As the picture changed and edits were made, I would adjust what I had written to conform to the new picture.

S: I know Scott wrote one of the songs at the end. I was under the impression that most of the music came from the original book. {I have not seen the original publication.}

R: No that's not true. Actually we used almost none of the music from the book. One song however—in the movie we refer to it as “The Courting Song,” that Scott sings to Sharon, Cynthia Nixon—came from the book, albeit completely rearranged. We opted to use none of the (other) music.

S: There was initially a mention of a CD. Tom Spiroff let that leak. [laughing] Were there full-length versions of the songs recorded for future use?

R: Yes there were, and they all exist here in my studio at the moment. I'm not quite certain what's going to happen with a CD, if there will ever really be one. I hope so. There again, CBS pushed the schedule up so far ahead for us, there just wasn't time to address that.

S: I have a suggestion: If there is ever a DVD release of *Papa's Angels*, maybe the full-length versions could be included as bonus tracks with the DVD.

R: That's an idea. I'm not sure that's ever been done before with a television release.

S: Several of Scott's television projects have already come out on DVD, and I think, as the format becomes more prevalent in the market, they're going to do a lot more with it.

R: Well, you're probably right. That's a great idea.

S: And I think the potential for sales would be better than just the CD by itself.

R: Oh yeah. I would think so too.

S: I noticed that Bruce Frazier also worked on *Papa's Angels*. Have you been working with him routinely?

R: No, Bruce worked on it from afar. Bruce left Los Angeles about two years ago, and is now living in the mountains in North Carolina. He is heading up a program at the University of North Carolina that teaches film and television scoring. We wanted some specific music that could not be done out here. There was a scene in the movie, which was (unfortunately) shortened. It was the funeral scene at the graveyard, in which a gospel song is being sung. We could not do that here in the way I wanted to do it, so Bruce recorded it with a group back in North Carolina for us. So that's how he became involved.

S: You mentioned you have another series.

R: Yes. I had been working on *The Pretender* (which ended in June 2000) and I've just started working on Don Johnson's series, *Nash Bridges*. I re-wrote the theme and have been writing the music for this new season.

S: I know we have readers who have been watching. Did any other people from *Pretender* come over with you?

R: No. I think I'm the only one from *Quantum Leap* on this show. Of course, on *Pretender* there were a number of us from *Quantum Leap*, but not as far as *Nash Bridges* is concerned. [Laughing] I wish there were!

S: Well, [laughing] maybe next season. It looks like *Nash Bridges* will be around for a while.

R: I hope so.

S: Thank you so much for again taking time for me and our readers.

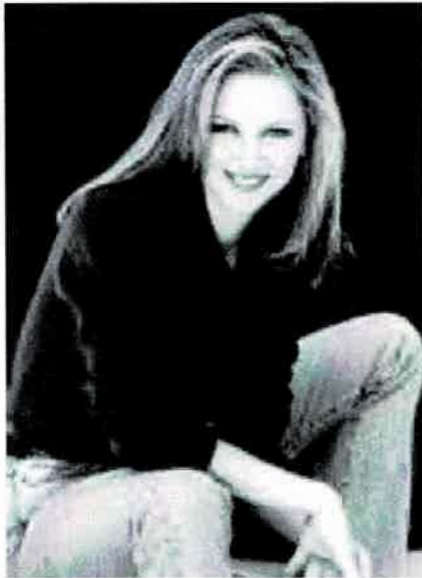
R: It's been nice talking to you.

CATCHING UP WITH NATASHA

November 12, 2000

by Janey Graves

Natasha, who appeared at KC Leap in 1998, and who we have come to know in the pages of issues 19 and 20 of *The Observer*, preferred to do this interview via e-mail.



Janey: We last saw you in "The Coma Episode" of *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, *Martial Law*, and a Montgomery Wards commercial. What have you been doing professionally since then?

Natasha: Since you last saw me in 1998 at KCLep, I have been a guest star on a few TV shows. Besides *Martial Law*, I've had amazing roles on *Viper*, *Silk Stalkings*, *JAG* (again), *VIP*, and a small role on a UPN movie called *The Darwin Conspiracy* and a WB show called *Popular* (my scene however, was cut out of the final show). In addition to the Montgomery Wards commercial, I was in an iVillage.com commercial, but my testimony didn't make the final cut.... Oh well.... I did get paid!

Janey: You have told us in the past that you are learning to fly. How far have you come with that?

Natasha: I received my private pilots' certificate February 3, 2000. Presently, I am at the end of my IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) training. It is the most difficult certificate to obtain and it has saved many lives. It means I am learning to take-off, fly, and land in minimum visibility conditions. I have my own plane, a new Beechcraft Bonanza A/36 Jaguar edition and it is equipped with the

best instruments. It is a high performance plane with retractable gear. I have had instruction in using it, so that I can get an endorsement, and be checked-out for that type of plane.

Janey: Congratulations on your marriage. Some of us have seen coverage of your wedding on the E! Television Network. Can you tell us anything more about it?

Natasha: My wedding to John Stuart Farrand (pronounced Fair-end) was on Saturday, March 11th, 2000. It had rained in L.A. for the previous three weeks. On the night before my wedding, my fiancé and I had a dinner party at our house for all the family, the wedding party, and out-of-town guests. There were about 70 people in the house and garden, and it was the most beautiful night ever—the weather was perfect. That night I went with my bridesmaids to the Beverly Hills Hotel where we spent the night and prepared for an early morning to do make-up, hair, photos, etc. I didn't allow John to see me before the ceremony.

At 3pm my childhood Serbian Orthodox priest married us at the beautiful St. Sofia Greek Orthodox Cathedral. My mom walked me down the aisle and John was beaming at the end of the long walkway. My dress was made for me and my diamond necklace was a gift from the groom. E! covered much of the pre-wedding frenzy, and Academy Award-winning cinematographer John Alonzo was filming, using the very first digital camera by Panavision. (My husband is CEO and President of Panavision). As a matter of fact, he filmed *Chinatown* and recently George Clooney's *Failsafe*. These cameras are now being used by George Lucas for all the *Star Wars* Episodes. Once I've edited the digital film-quality footage, I'll show it at 2001 Orlando Leap.

The reception was held at the famous Beverly Hills Hotel with two bands, one for Serbian folk music. The highlight was when my mom totally surprised me with a singer, his acoustic guitar, and a song written for me based on my childhood. I didn't cry; I sobbed out loud! I will also bring a copy of the song to Orlando Leap.

Janey: What other *QL* alumni have you talked with lately?
Natasha: Two days ago I bumped into Beverly Leech. We were auditioning for two different commercials at the same studio. She had long brown hair with bangs and I had to look hard to recognize her. She has also gotten married

and is very happy. She told me she was auditioning for *JAG* and I told her to say hello for me. She did and they all sent their love. It made my day. These are the same producers from *QL*.

I have seen John D'Aquino several times. One time I took him flying in a rented Cessna. After we landed, I told him he was my first non-pilot passenger. He didn't look that well.

I also ran into Don Bellisario at a restaurant. I bow to that man. He will just have to hire me again. Funny, that same night in the same restaurant, I sat next to George Clooney and Lucy Liu. I asked George if he knew the cameraman, John Alonzo and he said he did. I told him John had filmed my wedding and George responded, "Oh, you married that Panavision guy; he told me how beautiful the wedding was."

I also see Elya Baskin, the Russian man who played a general in my *QL* episode. I ran into a guy named Gary who was Scott's stunt double. The resemblance is unbelievable! I've worked with Diamond Farnsworth, the stunt coordinator on *QL* and *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, and I've worked with many of the same hair and make-up people from *QL*.

Janey: Any travels you would care to tell us about?

Natasha: This summer I was fortunate for the second time to be a guest on board a private yacht. (It is 195' so I refer to it as a ship.) It is owned by the man who owns Revlon, Sunbeam, Panavision, and a few more companies. I was especially happy because I was also able to invite my favorite Uncle and Aunt from Chicago. They have always been wonderful to me and they hadn't had a vacation anywhere since their honeymoon, twenty-one years ago. So, I treated them to travel to Sardinia, cruise to the Italian Coast up to Portofino, around to San Tropez, Cannes, and Nice. Then, we flew to Paris for three days and London for two days. They were ecstatic and I was so happy that I was able to bring them more happiness.

Janey: Are you going to change your name professionally, as you mentioned online?

Natasha: I am keeping Natasha Pavlovich as my professional name, for now.

Janey: Would you like to mention some charity or community involvement that you are passionate about right now?

Natasha: I am always passionate about Christianity. I attend church most Sundays and I give tithe. For several years now I have helped rebuild my village in Yugoslavia.

One of my uncles has built a church in our village and a bridge over the Drina River. The bridge connects Bosnia with Serbia and has saved over 300 thousand lives. My family continues to build around the bridge, called the Pavlovich Bridge. It brings jobs and money to all our neighbors. My stepbrother (via mom's marriage) has been to Bosnia about five times in the last year, donating his concrete business. I want to build a better school with computers and Internet services for the town and a movie theater, of course. Every time I earn money, I put some aside for that cause.

Janey: What's on the horizon for you? Any upcoming projects we can be looking out for?

Natasha: I have been writing a book called "The Way It All Happened" and it is basically my life story. I am not eager about letting anyone read it because it is the whole truth. Maybe I'll publish it when I'm in my 70's. I am also working on "Unlikely"—a script based on my book. Otherwise, I'm reading lots of scripts looking for something to produce. I have read several that were really bad and I passed on those altogether. Meanwhile, showbiz is picking up a bit so I'm looking forward to acting again.

Janey: What is the status of your web site?

Natasha: I'm not all that computer savvy. I've bothered Jo Fox enough! She's been so kind to build my web site, and in one move I erased it. I've decided to have a professional company set it up with a viewable reel and all kinds of interesting stuff. If you want to view the work in progress, go to:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~johnfarrand/>

Janey: Is there any book, movie, play, or television show you are excited about?

Natasha: Lately I've been reading a lot for my IFR written test. It's hard. I love books on Amelia Earhart, and I'm looking forward to Spielberg's movie on the Wright Brothers. I am also a fan of make-up artist Kevin Aucoin, who has a book out now called *Face Forward*. I just think he is a true artist. I have another stack of books waiting for me.

Readers who would like to get in touch with Natasha can reach her by e-mail at:

natashapavlovich@hotmail.com

SCOTT'S TELEPHONE Q&A
IndyLeap 2000
 Transcript courtesy of Helene Kaplan
 Condensed by Sharon Major

Dawn Geraghty (to Scott): Can you hear me?

Scott: I can hear you fine!

Dawn: Great! Wonderful! Everybody say "Hi" real quick.

Everyone: Hi, Scott!

Scott: Hello back!

Margaret Colchin: Hi, Scott. This is Margaret. How are you?

Scott: Hi, Margaret. How are you doing?

Margaret: Doing fine. Rosie's here too and says a big hi. You should see the big grin on her face, (because) you're taking time to call and talk to everybody.

Scott: Good. I've got a big grin on my face, too.

Margaret: I'd like to know something more about the *Papa's Angels* project. Is there still a CD in the works, and can you tell us anything more about the project?

Scott: There's not a CD; there's been talk of a CD, but I don't think its going to happen immediately because we don't have the time. We got the order really late, and we're just trying to get the production mounted right now. It should air sometime in December, so we're already behind, as it were. There's going to be a lot of live music in it, so hopefully somewhere down the line we'll be able to convert that. They're reissuing the book it was adapted from and we may even try to get a little bit of the CD or something into that book. So, we're working on that, too.

Margaret: That'll be great; many of us have already ordered the book.

Scott: Oh, good. They're making a big reprinting of it and I'm not sure when it's going to come out but I think it's coming out sometime in the fall.



Scott learned to play the banjo for *Papa's Angels*
 Screen capture by Billie Mason

Pat: Hi, Scott. This is Pat. Lorraine and I would like to ask you what would you consider your most difficult role apart from *Quantum Leap*?

Scott: Fatherhood! <laughter>

Pat: and??

Scott [chuckling]: That's it! <laughter>

Debbie Jones: Hi, Scott. This is Debbie.

Scott: I know! Hi. <laughter>

Debbie: I wanted to ask you if there was any type of role or any characteristic in a role that you simply would not portray?

Scott: You know, it varies. I turned down a dark script from an independent a few years ago that had to do with playing a father who was a pedophile. There was nothing redeeming about this character or a reason—there was nothing sympathetic about him. It made me kind of ill to read it, but that's not the reason not to do it, if there's a point to make. That was one case where the character is so unsympathetic, with no kind morality or sense of justice in the piece, that I have trouble with it. Even bad guys have reasons. I did *In the Name of the People* for that (reason),

because I wanted to explore (that) side of humanity or the brain. There was something about that guy that I could make into a human being, and there were elements in that story I thought really needed to be told. To be a part of that is great. Sometimes it's not worth it to do the other stuff.

British Leaper: I was just wondering, do you still hear from Dean?

Scott: Do I still hear from Dean?

Q: Yeah!

Scott: Yeah, we had a big argument on the phone about a week and a half ago. <laughter> He left me a message saying that he was going to be in town soon and then I didn't hear from him. So I called him back and said, "I thought you were going to be coming into town soon," and he said, "I already came to town." I said, "I thought you were going to call," and he said, "No, I told you I was coming to town and you didn't call me." So, we fought, we argued, and then I called him back and said, "You never call me unless I call you first." So we did one of those things. <laughter>

We called each other about 6 times in one night, so now we don't have to talk for a year. (chuckling) <laughter>

Deborah{?}: Now that you've been in a big Oscar winning movie, have you noticed that you're receiving more or better scripts, and have you noticed a trend in the type of roles that you're being offered?



Sam Robards and Scott --
a couple of Jim's in *American Beauty*

Scott [chuckling]: No! <laughter>

Debra: So you haven't been typecast?

Scott: I haven't been offered any more scripts because of it, and I've been offered the same number of gay roles that I was offered before. <laughter> That was one of those things that after the premiere everyone said, "You did such a great job; it didn't seem like you were acting at all." <laughter>

I think that's a compliment <g>!!

Barbara: I'm an East-Coaster so I have a selfish question for you. We were a little disappointed that you didn't return to Broadway last year. We were wondering if you had any plans of any sort to be coming back. I know I asked you this question a couple of years ago and your answer was, "You never know," but can we get a different answer today? <laughter>

Scott: First of all, I couldn't tell you were from the East Coast. <laughter> Are you from New York?

Barbara: Yes, I am.

Scott: Brooklyn or the Bronx?

Barbara: Oh, please, no! Long Isl....'Longuyland!' <laughter>

Scott [laughing]: No, I wouldn't put you with those other people! Ah, you know, I was kind of looking forward to going back to New York last year, but that didn't work out for a variety of reasons. Probably in the end it was a good thing. I'm always looking for a good show and a good reason to go back there. It may be a little easier if I don't get away for a long time, and it'll probably be more likely that I'll find a way to get back there. People still call me to come and do things there, but unfortunately, it's kind of the same answer. I hope to get there but it's a question of timing and also a question of the show. Some.... shows...(garbled)...I don't really want to go back to do that right now. My eyes and my ears are wide open and we're looking for stuff. It just hasn't worked out, you know.

Barbara: I appreciate the answer.

Scott: You bet. I'll try to give you a new one next time. I hate being redundant. <laughter >

Q: What do you think of the way *Quantum Leap* ended? <laughter>

Scott [laughing]: Well, hopefully, it hasn't ended! I think that was the challenging part about the ending.

We still hear rumors and still hear people talking about it. However, of late there have been a long succession of TV shows moving to the big screen that have flopped miserably, so right now that market isn't looking too good. But never say, "Never." Dean and I joke about it, "If we don't hurry, it's gonna be Tom Cruise and Michael Caine or somebody." <laughter>

And they'd be good!

Audience: No! You'd be better!

Jeanne Koenig: Michael Stern and John D'Aquino are our guests. They're not here right now but Michael Stern wanted me to say 'hello' for him.

Scott: Hello, Michael Stern! I haven't seen him in awhile. I saw Johnny in a restaurant about a month ago, in L.A., so tell them 'hello', back!

Dawn: We sure will. I have a couple of other audience questions for you. Jamie Cohen asks: I just recently heard "I Don't Believe in Heroes Anymore" from *3 Guys Naked from the Waist Down* for the first time and it really touched me. Is there a song you've recorded anywhere that is your favorite, and why?

Scott: That was certainly my favorite from that show, and I would say I still think it was probably the highlight of the things I got to record. "Imagine" was my favorite, with a couple of *La Mancha* songs being a close second.

Dawn: Mary Gunn would like to know what character, fictional or non-fictional would you like to play?

Scott: Ohhhhhh. That's a good question. I wish I could have some good snappy answers. You know, Patrick Stewart would have a good answer. <laughter>

Fictional characters: Sweeney Todd is still something I'm looking forward to doing. My thing is really looking for new characters to play. Historical characters are fun and I haven't gotten to do that in awhile. I don't have any particular historical figures that I (want to) play.

Dawn: Can't hear you....Scott are you still there?

Scott: I'm here! Sorry.

Dawn: We thought we lost our connection.

Scott: No, No. I don't have the 'definitive Hamlet' waiting in my bag somewhere trying to get out! <laughter> I'm just hoping to create new stuff as long as I can.

Dawn: We have a lot of visitors here from across the pond who would like to know when or if you have any plans to do any projects in England.

No answer

Dawn: We've stumped him!

No answer

Are you there? I think we've lost him...are you there? He appears to not be there.

Scott: Can you hear me?

Dawn: Now we can - you were cutting out. Did you hear the question?

Scott: How am I now?

Dawn: You're fine now.

Scott: Ok...I'll stand still <laughter>.....force of habit.

Dawn: Were you able to hear the question or do you need the question again?

Silence <laughter>

Are you still there? Are you there at all? ... crank it up (the volume)...

Scott: I'm here!! Don't give up on me <g>!

Dawn: We're not; we cranked up the volume right when you came back on!

Were you able to hear the last question or do you need it to be repeated?

Scott: No, I heard it. I'd love to work over there in England sometime. I've been offered a few things in the theatre, but that hasn't worked out. Sometime (airplane overhead).....maybe I'll be over in a year...sometime...

Dawn: So, let's open it up real quick to the audience. Please keep questions brief. Okay, Margaret.

Margaret: Scott, this is Margaret, again. All of us were really impressed by your performance in *In the Name of the People*. Did you consider submitting that for an Emmy?

Scott: I'm not sure if I did or didn't. The movie didn't get a lot of attention out here. The numbers were fair for their little Wednesday night movie. Everybody at CBS wanted me to submit it, and to be quite honest, I don't even know if I did. You know that Emmy/Movie of the Week world has been all about the big specials and the HBO and Showtime stuff. The network television movies of the week get very few nominations these days.

Margaret: We all thought that was really the definition of acting. It was just so antithetical to what you are. It was just a superb performance.

Scott: Well, thank you. It was a real challenge and very, very disturbing to be involved with. Yet at the same time it was very rewarding, too. I liked what the movie was about.

Jo Fox: Hi, Scott! I was wondering if *Above Suspicion* was going to air in the United States?

Scott: I don't know the answer to that question. I think they're still working on the sale. I heard different cable outlets (may be interested), but I haven't heard anything definitive yet. You may know more than I do about that, but I haven't heard.

Mel Walker: Hi, Scott. This is Melanie from St. Louis, Missouri.

Scott: Hi, Melanie. St. Louis? Alright!!

Mel: About 10 minutes from your hometown!

Scott: Alright!

Mel: Two questions: First, is there any chance we'll be seeing you at The MUNY in the near future and second, what do you have coming up in the future that we have to look forward to?

Scott: Well, I'd love to do The MUNY. Of course, I wouldn't be there this summer. If indeed a strike happens—if the writers, actors, and directors go out—hopefully I'll be fortunate enough to jump into the theatre world. So, that may happen if we're all out of work out here!

I just got back from Vancouver. I just shot a small part in a new Showtime miniseries called *It's a Girl Thing*. I think I'm one of three guys in the entire piece. It's four one-hour stories. I don't know when they're planning to release it, but that's the most recent thing I've done.



Scott with Linda Hamilton, Lynn Whitfield and Mia Farrow from *It's A Girl Thing*

Sandy Herbert: Hi, Scott. This is Sandy from Youngstown, Ohio. I was at *Love Letters* last year and I had the great pleasure of talking to both of your parents—your dad for quite awhile, your mom just briefly. I was just wondering how they're doing and if you'd tell them I said 'hello.' I think your dad would remember me, he'll remember the Youngstown part.

Scott: OK... I will tell them both 'hello'. They're both doing very well. Thank you for asking. They're healthier than most people I know, (and) they're doing fantastic.

Helene: Hi, Scott. This is Helene, also from New York. Can you guess which part?

Scott [chuckling]: No, I can't. You have to talk a little longer.

Helene: I'm from Da Bronx <g>.

Scott [laughing]: Well, as soon as you said 'Bronx', I knew. I played a guy from the Bronx a few years ago.

Helene (teasingly): Yes, I think some of us might have seen it. <laughter>

Scott: Alright.....time (garbled)

Dawn: He's lost again.

Scott: No, I'm here!! <laughter> But I am lost a little bit, [laughing] that's for sure!

Helene: We are going to be seeing *Nite Club Confidential* later this evening and it reminded me that according to the news we've heard, BPI has the rights to that and *Night Never Ending*, as well as a few other projects. We wanted to know, other than *Papa's Angels*, is there any project that BPI is working on that we might be interested in?

No answer

Dawn: Scott, you're going out again.

Scott: I'm moving just 6 inches!! Am I good? <laughter>

Dawn: You're good; you're good!

Scott: Ok...I'll freeze, again. This is a very hard job for me to stand still here talking! <laughter>

Actually, we've let the rights go to both of those. We've worked with *Nite Club* for ten years and *Night Never Ending* about 8 or 9 years. We haven't stopped pursuing them, but we're pursuing them from different angles right now. But, we still have things everywhere that are in Development Hell, as they call it. Fortunately, *Papa's Angels* has found its way to the surface and it looks like it's going to happen. That's very exciting and hopefully some more things will make it. Sometimes when people threaten to go out on strike, there's a big scurry to get some things in the works, so that may actually work for us.

Jamie Cohen: You answered one of my questions before, but I have another one. I loved your appearances on *Murphy Brown*. I was wondering, would you ever consider doing any guest-star roles on television in the future?

Scott: I have considered them. I've not done any recently because if I end up back in a series on television, then I want to be a further step away from the 'guest-star world.' I don't know if and when I'll be doing that. I haven't been considering them for awhile

now, but if the right thing came up... There are a couple of shows. An interesting part, like Larroquette played on *The Practice*, or something that was a little bit against type, might be fun to do. Or (if it was) with people I enjoy working with, I might do that.

Dawn: We would just like to once again thank you for calling in. <APPLAUSE>

Audience: We love you, Scott!!

Scott: Thank you for having me. It sounds like you guys are having a great time. I'm going to go back to my niece's 5th birthday party. I'm standing in the alleyway behind the gymnastics place they've rented, but no one's looking at me too funny. I've enjoyed talking with all of you and I really appreciate all of you keeping the faith out there. "You never know... You never know!!" <laughter>

Dawn: Thank you very much for calling and enjoy the birthday party. We look forward to seeing your many projects in the future.

Scott: Thanks! Have a great rest of your weekend!

Everyone: Bye!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Addendum to Issue 22

In our last issue, we featured **Michael Bellisario** and let you know "what he's doing now," (and regretably, forgot to mention his role in *QL*'s "Play Ball".)



In case you haven't been able to catch his appearances on *JAG*, Michael has provided us with this photo, so we can see what he looks like now.

MICHAEL STERN Q&A
IndyLeap 2000
 Transcribed by Trudy Costagliola

From the IndyLeap 2000 Program:

Michael Stern was born in New York and moved to California when he was about three years old. His father, Leonard B. Stern, was very prominent in the entertainment world, first writing jokes for Milton Berle, *Ma and Pa Kettle* and *Abbott and Costello* movies, and for *The Honeymooners*. He then went on to create and/or produce about 20 different television shows, including *McMillan and Wife* and *Get Smart*.

At first, Michael did not feel that show business was right for him and decided to go into Newscasting. He attended the University of Arizona in Tucson and then worked in Tucson until about 1984, when he left the station and moved back to L.A. to work for a small production company as an assistant. After a year, he became an editor.

He got his first break editing a one-hour television show with *Tour of Duty*, which aired from 1988-1990. After that series, he went on to being co-editor on *Knots Landing* and then *Tequila and Bonetti*.

Michael's first episode as editor on *Quantum Leap* was "Play Ball," which proved to be a bit of an editing challenge. The original ending had the ballplayer pitch two strikes and sign a major league contract. When Don saw the scene, he didn't believe that it could ever happen that way. He wanted it changed to the ballplayer pitching the whole game, but it still had to be shown in only 30 seconds. One of the assistant's sons built a scoreboard, and with voiceovers, Michael made it look like the ballplayer pitched the whole game.

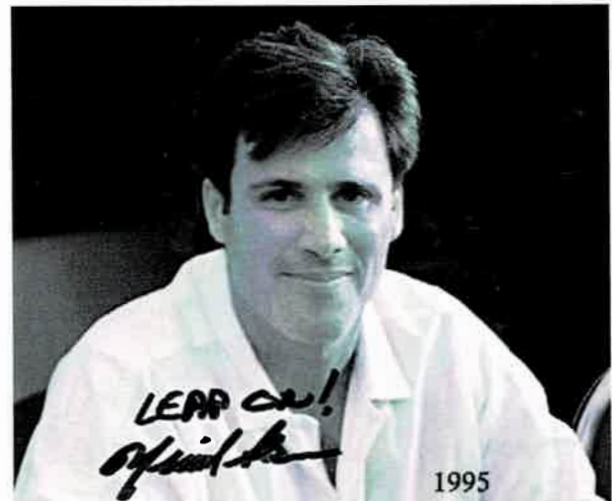
One of Michael's weirdest memories from *Quantum Leap* was seeing Scott—wearing a dress—watch the dailies from the episode shot the week before when he played himself and his father.

After *Quantum Leap*, Michael was an editor on *SeaQuest*, *The Secret World of Alex Mack*, *Lois and Clark*, *L.A. Firefighters*, *The X-Files*, *Brooklyn South*, *The Net*, and *Strange World*. He is currently an editor on *Angel*.

Q&A WITH MICHAEL STERN
AT INDYLEAP 2000

July 29, 2000

Transcribed by Trudy Costagliola



It's interesting how *Quantum Leap* keeps coming around. About two years ago, I was finishing up on a series *Brooklyn South* with Michael Watkins {Director of Photography on *Quantum Leap*}. I got a call from a woman who I didn't know and she asked if I was available to work on a show that summer. I said, "Sure. What is it called?" She said, "*The Net*." I said, "Okay." She said, "Deborah Pratt will be calling you." What a small world! I'd seen Deborah a couple of times at coffee, but she never mentioned that she was going to do a show. It was nice working with her, and I still see her occasionally at coffee. Joe Napolitano, who directed a lot of *Quantum Leap* episodes, has just moved to Austin, Texas. His wife and my wife are best friends and our families have become very close. Tommy Thompson and I are still good friends. I just talked to him the other day; he's working over at Fox.

(Back to) Michael Watkins! It was funny; I was working on *The X-Files* and he was working on *NYPD Blue* when he asked me to come do *Brooklyn South*. *Brooklyn South* only lasted a year, and he then went to *X-Files*. So it was kind of a weird circle. I heard he left *The X-Files* and he's doing a new series, *Semper Fi*. I see Scott Bakula every now and then; I run into

him in a restaurant and we say hi. I think that's about it for the *Quantum Leap* connection. I'm open to questions because I'm running out of stuff to say.

Q. How is *Angel* different from *Quantum Leap*?

Michael: That's a good question. It's a lot darker. Editing on *Angel*, like the majority of the series that I've worked on, is really like putting together a little movie each week. Ninety-five percent of the shows I've edited have a lot of action and special effects, which makes it fun. What's also nice is that we are given sole creative control. They let us do what we want. When I came to *Quantum Leap*, several seasons had already gone by and we had to abide by the certain way things were done. On *Angel*, because it was Year One, they said do whatever you want to make it different from *Buffy*. Hopefully, it's got a different style than anything you've ever seen on television, especially with the entire transition between the scenes. So we came up with these ideas between scenes like these quick flashframes and then we wondered how we could expound on that and make it bigger. So I started manipulating film, turning stuff black and white, superimposing images over others, and whatever. What's especially fun in *Angel*, I know I'm guaranteed a big action sequence. In the script it may say FIGHT, but I'm getting hours of coverage. The fight may start here and have to end over here, but I can put it together the way I want, and that's an editor's dream. In dialogue scenes, you're going by the script—this line, that line—especially in television. You know eventually what is going to happen; there's going to be a lot of close ups, back and forth, and I cut accordingly. But in action scenes, it's like, here's the canvas, here are all the pieces, just put it together the way you want. It offers me the opportunity to go to it and have a blast. Hopefully the material is there to allow me to do it the way that I like. The nice thing is the show should go on for a while. *Buffy* is in its fifth year; this is *Angel*'s second.

Q. The first time I met you was when I found out that the editor is really God. For the people that don't know what an editor does, can you give us just a brief summary?

Michael: Yes sure, a lot of people working on the show don't know what an editor does. <laughter>. Most one-hour television shows are shot in eight days, some go longer, but that's what the schedule should be. I'm always a day behind shooting. Whatever they shoot on Monday, I'll get that material on Tuesday. Roughly an hour television show is forty-three minutes

for the actual screen time. I'm getting about eight hours of material to cut in that forty-three minutes. When I'm cutting the first cut I'm left alone. "Here's our material do what you want."

A one-hour television show is shot as single-cam, meaning they use one camera. If there is a scene with you and me talking, the camera will start with a huge wide shot—a master shot—that's going to come in, move around and settle on you. Next they may shoot your close up; then they go to my close up; they may shoot over my shoulder; they may shoot it over your shoulder. They might then put the camera in position so that we're now in profile, all for one scene. There may be ten takes of the master and the director prints four. Now I'm getting four takes of just that master and three or four of the close ups. I take that material, cut it together the way I'd like to see it, and hopefully, in the way you guys would like to see it. The best way I can describe editing a one-hour is that I'm given a thousand-piece puzzle to put together the way I'd like to see it. This is opposed to a half-hour sitcom, which is done on a set. They're actually using four cameras and it's almost cut for the editors. They use three isolated cameras, which might be on three different characters, and another camera they're switching around so it's covering the whole thing as it's being shot. To me that's not much of a challenge. I like to be given this palette and do what I want.

Q: Do you get notes from the Director, I really like this take, use this one, or do they leave it up to you?

Michael: Sometimes yes. If there's something they were specific about, then I will get a note: "I really like Take 2 on this." But most of the time the directors are so busy, they trust me and let me do it. "Michael knows what he's doing. We'll let him do it." It's all subjective. There is no right or wrong. I don't mind if someone comes in and wants to make a change, but I hate it when someone says, "Well, this is wrong." It's not wrong; it's just maybe my take on it, not theirs. There once was a very conventional way of editing shows: you start wide and then move in closer and closer. I don't like to cut that way. I like to throw things off balance. Sometimes it will be a little battle for me, but I kind of explain why and they'll open up to it. What happens a lot today is every show that has a writer, the writer is now a producer, so they think with a writer's mind and all of a sudden it's "Oh, we need that in close-up. We need that in close-up." I say, "Then why do we build sets? Throw them against the wall and shoot them!" It's got to be more than that. Depending on the scene, I like to save the close-

up for an important line. I may play everything wide, and then for the important line like “I love you” or whatever, that’s where I’ll come in, because I want to emphasize that. I may want to play one person in close-up and someone else wider, depending on the feel of the scene. Sometimes I’ll get in those battles and I know it’s coming from the writers’ perspective, because they’re sometimes just thinking about the written word and they want to see it in close up. Sometimes they say, “This is the way I want it,” and then I have to do it.

When I start out, I like to do it the way I want—whatever I feel, and this is my shot to do it. I don’t want to (think), “I know this is a set pattern; this is probably what they want.” I’m going to try something different. I know the way that I cut a fight is different than someone else who cuts a fight. I couldn’t tell you by looking at stuff what’s different, but I’ll get a call from a friend saying he knew that was my episode before he saw my name. So maybe I’ve created my own style. When I’m cutting a fight, I like to cut around to the other side right before the punch hits. I rarely cut a fight where you’ll see the connection of a punch over someone’s shoulder. I think I get more movement out of it, and I know that’s the way I always cut my fights. Others may want to see the connection of the punch and that’s the beauty of being able to do it—there is no one way. Sometimes I can get away with making one punch look like two. There may be a fight that was shot with only three punches, but if I can steal enough material, I’ll maybe send five. That’s the fun of being able to play.

I love putting temp music in. This is something that I have always done throughout my career, but on *Angel*, this is the first time it has actually been required. They really want a lot of temp music. This means, I’ll find a piece of music I like for a scene. I know it’s not going to stay permanently, but it helps move scenes along. I’ll also put in a lot of temp sound effects, but usually once it’s done, the directors, the producers, and the Network want the music stripped out. Sometimes we have our music composed or sometimes they find a piece they really like. The soundtrack I like to use a lot is from *Arlington Road*, and sometimes the composer will try and copy it. I know some friends who work on other shows and they’re told not to add any music. Finding a piece that works is like a little bonus. If I watch a fight scene without music, it just sits there. If I put music in, it really does change it and helps move it along.

The majority of one-hour television shows always come

in heavy, meaning that it’s longer than the forty-three minutes and whatever seconds. Since it cannot go over, they have to decide what needs to be taken out. After I cut the show together, I sit with the Director and he makes his changes. Then we sit down with the producers of the show and they will go through it and make whatever changes they want. It’s such a long process that there are actually three editors on a series. Generally there are about twenty-two shows a year, so each guy gets seven or eight.



Photo by Jenna Major

When this is finished, there’s still a lot more to do. I have to sit down with the music supervisor and spot the show with him, then sound effects, added dialogue, and background. Sometimes dialogue has to be replaced. Friends will come over to visit and say, “Boy, I had no idea.”

The whole process is done electronically. It’s shot on film and then transferred to a tape. I get that tape and put it into an editing system called Avid, which gives me a digitized picture. As I’m cutting it’s storing all of the material. Once my cut is done and it’s all locked, they go back to the pristine negative, which has not been touched since the day it was shot, and they put the show together. On the air you will see a quality picture. Sometimes I will watch a show on-air and I’ll say, “Oh, that’s what it looks like.” Because I’m working with a picture that is so digitized and compressed, I’m missing a lot of the colors and stuff, but for speed and storage space that’s the sacrifice we have to make. Electronic editing is kind of a blessing and a curse. The schedules are so quick we may be working on two shows at once and so the image is not the best. Sometimes new directors will come in, look at their picture and say, “Oh my God, what happened? It looked beautiful and I did a great job with the

lighting!” I say, “Don’t worry. Trust me, it won’t look that way.”

Q: How far ahead of the air-date are you?

Michael: It depends on where we are in the season; it’s hard to say. I’m starting work for the new season on Tuesday (August 1) and it’s my understanding that the first five shows are going to be very tight. I remember I was doing the season finale in Year Four on *The X-Files*. They finished shooting on a Friday and we had to have the show locked and done by Sunday. That’s crazy, but that’s just what the schedule is. I think this year a lot of the networks are delaying their start because they obviously don’t want to compete with the Olympics, but I’m still told our first five episodes are on a very tight schedule. Closer to the holidays they’re going to show re-runs, so we will get a little breathing room. We’re still shooting but it’s not as crazy. It gives us time to catch up. In February when they do the Sweeps, they’re in this crunch schedule again. Sometimes I have plenty of time, I have weeks; other times, it’s like, “Man!” On a show that has to be crunched, the plus side is that I might have a little time afterwards. Actually I like working under those conditions because I’m used to it I guess. On *Quantum Leap*—it seems so long ago—there were about ten editing systems. Now they’re down to about two, Avid and Lightworks, with Avid doing the majority. The editing system that we were working on back then is no longer around anymore. You had to be on top of your cuts because it was a slow system. Since it was slow, I worked faster, I guess. It doesn’t bother me when a schedule is crunched. I’m used to it and I like that.

Q: You spoke about digital editing. Digital editing is now available for the home market. Since film has a very short shelf life, they’re trying to save a lot of the older films for posterity purposes. One of the processes is to do them digitally because that will save longer. What about shows like this?

Michael: That’s a good question. I think they’re doing some smaller films on digital video. I don’t think they’re doing any television yet, or at least not that I know of. It’s still shot on film, and that film—regardless if it’s a show that may never air or a pilot—all that negative is saved. They send it out to the salt mines. I think there’s one in Salt Lake City. You name a show from way back and that film exists somewhere, and it’s preserved a lot better today than it was in the old days when they had kinescope which would deteriorate. Even though we’re cutting

electronically, the film is still there and you go back to that negative. The editing systems store all of the key codes—the edge numbers—and these all refer back to the negative. When you’re seeing a feature, you’re seeing the way it was shot on film, even though it may have been cut electronically. I hope they never stop using film because you can really see the difference. Half-hour sitcoms are pretty much shot on tape and there’s a ‘brightness’ to it that I don’t like. Compare that to stuff that’s shot on film, especially in black and white, Spielberg’s work. Look at *Schindler’s List* and what he did in *Saving Private Ryan*. I don’t see that happening digitally because he was manipulating F-stops, exposures and using different types of film stock, which gives it that look as if it were being seen through a camera of someone who was there.

Q: You said that you’re working a day behind. Do you ever get something on Tuesday and then on Thursday you get something, so that you have to go back and change what you have already finished?

Michael: All the time. All the time. A lot of times the show won’t be finished in the eight days and they’ll schedule something for two weeks later, to pick up this and that. Sometimes I’ll cut a scene and because of miscommunication with the set or whatever, two days later, I can get more coverage for that scene. I wouldn’t have cut it if I had known that we’re getting more coverage, because sometimes it may change the way a scene is cut. One change may affect my next four cuts, because I’m trying to match someone’s hand movements. I’m very conscious of matching: When someone is picking up a glass, I want to match that movement. It is frustrating to hear, “I don’t worry about matching.” My name says Editor, so it’s important to me. I may take the reading from Take Two and actually stick it in the mouth in Take Four because Take Four matched better. Sometimes it fits perfectly, other times it doesn’t quite work but that’s the stuff you never see. Sometimes the reading of the sentence was great, but one word was mispronounced. If I can find it on another tape, I’ll just carve out that word and put it in their mouth. I can take a word—just a word in the middle of a sentence—and try to squeeze that word in. If the inflection is the same, you’ll never know. That’s the beauty of editing.

Q: How did you train?

Michael: I actually fell into it by accident. I went to the University of Arizona in Tucson. I wanted to have a career in News, but it wasn’t going the way I wanted, so I quit. Then I realized, what would I do now? I had

grown up in L.A. and I had said, "I'm never moving back to L.A. I never want to work there." But I had quit, and the only thing I really know is production, so I wondered if there was anything back in L.A. I would go to L.A. on weekends and try to set up interviews with production companies. I was offered a Production Assistant job at a small production company called the Arthur Company. I didn't really know what it entailed, but I was married and we had just had a baby, so we moved back to L.A. Basically, a Production Assistant is a Gopher—go for this, go for that, pick this up—and you get about \$250 bucks a week. I was doing this for a couple of weeks and they said the editor needs an assistant. I was introduced to Ned Weisman—we called him "The Neditor." <laughter> Ned is a great guy. He thought, "Thank God, we have some help!" At the time, they were in co-production with Turner Broadcasting doing three half-hour sitcoms, two of which were sharing the same stage. That's how low budget this was. Whereas a normal television series works for nine months, the advantage here was we worked year round. They did fifty episodes a year, really terrible stuff. Before I started, Ned was playing both Editor and Assistant. On days they were taping the half-hour sitcoms with multi-cameras, Ned was logging his own material that was coming in and keeping track of all the tapes. Editors don't do that! That's why they have assistants! So that's what I started doing. About a little over a year, they bumped Ned up to head of Post (Production) and they told me, "You are the Editor now." So I said, "Okay!" Now remember, this is a very small company. I kind of got my feet wet and I liked it. I was there a month shy of two years, and I figured I wanted to move onto the real world—get into network television and into the union. I didn't really know what that entailed, but I knew I wanted to make that jump. So I kept bothering this guy who was head of Post Production at a place called New World and he was very nice. He always returned my phone calls; he never promised me a job, but he was very cool. Finally one day he said, "Listen, I'm going to send you to learn an editing system. I don't have a job for you, but..." I was there about four days and he called me up and said, "Are you ready to be an assistant?" I said, "Yeah!" He said, "We're doing a show called *Sledgehammer*. We have two editors and they're trying to do it with one assistant. It's not working; they need two assistants." "Do I get in the Union?" "Yeah, put in your 30 days." This was now my first experience in a real cutting room. It was a big education and I learned a lot. While I was working on that show, I was watching a show on TV called *Tour of Duty*. I dug that show and thought I would love to work on something like that. I

knew *Sledgehammer* was not coming back the next year. *Tour of Duty* was through New World, the same company I was working for, so I found out the name of the producer of the show and I called him. He said, "Hey, come on down." The first year of *Tour of Duty* was shooting in Hawaii, but the editors were back in L.A. He said, "We're moving the whole production to L.A. next year, and we're making some changes." I hit it off with him very nicely, and he said, "Listen, the Editors are looking for assistants." So I met with a man named Michael Ripps—The Ripper <laughter> Everybody has a nickname!—and he hired me as his assistant. We were working on this very slow archaic system. *Tour of Duty* had these huge battle scenes every week! Michael asked, "Do you want to cut the battle scenes?" I said, "Yeah sure, cool!" I can't tell you how slow the system was, you almost had to go cut by cut before you could even see anything; it was a tape based system—it was just a nightmare! He didn't have the time to do it, and I was young and bright, so he let me do this a lot. I finally said, "Michael, can I share a credit? Can I get an editor's credit with you?" "Absolutely," he said. That's where I got my first credit. The next year Michael moved on, and I got bumped up. I was very, very fortunate because that doesn't happen a lot.

What is kind of nice was that it came full circle. Two years ago I worked on a show called *Strange World*, which unfortunately only aired three episodes. When they hired me, they said, "We're looking for another editor. Do you know anyone that's available?" I said, "Michael Ripps." Here was the guy who gave me my first break and I was able to bring him on.

Strange World was created by Howard Gordon, a writer and producer on *The X-Files*. He was asked to create a very dark show about the criminal misuse of Science. Although it was airing on ABC, the deal was with Fox. Fox said, "This is too dark. We're not going to push it." It was unfortunate because it was a great show. We did thirteen episodes and there was a full story arc. The thirteenth episode would have concluded the series; Howard had a feeling it wasn't going to make it. It was too bad they only aired three of them, but that's what happens in today's world. It used to be you'd get a full order of twenty-two episodes and they were going to air all twenty-two. Now mostly you get an order of thirteen, and it's a crapshoot! That's why when you get on a show that's a hit, you stay on it.

Luckily for me *Angel* is a fun show to edit and I know *Angel* will go on as long as it wants. It's like *The X-*

Files; I don't think *The X-Files* will get cancelled—it will be over when Chris Carter is tired of doing it. Joss Whedon, the creator of *Buffy* and *Angel*, is like the Chris Carter for the WB Network. He's really made that Network with *Buffy*. What made *Angel* appealing to me when they called me, I figured, even though it's a first year show, it's coming from the creator of *Buffy* and they're not going to cancel it. Even though the first order was for thirteen, I thought they're going to do a whole season and sure enough, it's done really well.

Q: As a viewer, in the case of shows that we talked about, where they filmed thirteen and they only showed three, what happens to all those? It seems like a waste of money.

Michael: Like in the series *Strange World*, they bought thirteen—they're paid for and they're done—fully scored with music and sound effects and you name it! Why not air it? For *Strange World* we kept saying, "Air them!" People will watch it in the Summer. Don't just dump it for whatever reason or because one person doesn't like it. Sometimes it almost seems like it's being sabotaged, but they just don't believe in the show anymore. They always blame the low ratings. You can skew the ratings any way you want. That's just a way out.

Q: Why don't they release the un-aired episodes on video?

Michael: I don't know. I don't understand it. The execs could come in here and give you a reason, and you would say b....., because sometimes it is. I understand when they're filming pilots, shooting a hundred and only thirty get picked. But not when they've bought a series, paid for it, and then end up not showing it. That's a good question. I wish I could answer it.

Q: When a network buys a series, does it belong to the network, or does it at some point revert to the producers?

Michael: I didn't actually ask Howard about that and I should have. I figured, since he created the series he should be able to buy it back or try to sell it to the Sci-Fi Channel. I would assume that ABC does own it. There are tons of scripts out there that never get done. If the writers ask, "Can I buy that back?" The answer is "No," because the network's fear is, "God forbid, although we're not going to make it, what if someone else does, (and it's a hit). *Strange World* was a good

series. Yes it was dark, but it wasn't as disturbing as *Millenium*, which I happened to like. For whatever reason they said, "We don't want to do it." So I'm not sure, I don't know if it can be bought back. It's just buried in the archives somewhere, sitting on the shelf. John D'Aquino: Hey Michael, can you talk a little bit about growing up in a Hollywood family and how it affected you?

Michael: Oh thanks, John!

John: Can we call you The Sternum? <laughter>



Michael and John kidding around

Michael: You write your own material, don't you?

My dad is Leonard Stern. He was an only child and at eighteen he was writing jokes for Milton Berle. He didn't get paid, but Milton took him everywhere. He started meeting a lot of people and he wrote some *Ma and Pa Kettle* and *Abbott and Costello* movies. Then Jackie Gleason hired him to write *The Honeymooners*. There were four writers—two teams—and my Dad was teamed up with a man named Syd Zelinka. I don't remember who the other two writers were. Jackie was very difficult to work with, but he took care of his writers because he knew that the writers were his bread and butter. If Jackie called my father at 3:00 in the morning and wanted to play cards, my Dad would go and play cards. My dad did this I think for three years and then he said, "I want to move to California and create my own shows." I was probably three when we moved to L.A. He ended up creating, being Executive Producer and directing on about twenty different TV shows: *Get Smart*, *Sergeant Bilko*, *The Phil Silvers Show*, *McMillan and Wife*. He has a list of credits!

Have you ever heard of *Mad Libs*? <answers of "Yes!" from the audience> My father and his best friend—and my godfather—Roger Price created that!

They were both writers and they came up with an idea they called “Mad Libs.” For those of you who don’t know, it’s a story with words missing. I could sit up here and say, “Give me a noun; give me a verb; give me an adjective” and then read back the story with these words in it, and hopefully they were funny. He and Roger came up with this but they had no idea how to market it—they were writers! They went to a publishing company, who said “No, these are a game.” They went to a game company, who said “No, this is a book.” So they said, “Fine! We’ll put our money together and publish whatever we can.” They actually sold it out of a friend’s clothing store.

They had another friend, Larry Sloan, who was in publishing. The three of them formed Price, Stern, Sloan Publishing Company (PSS), which during the 1960’s became one of the number-one publishers of children’s books. They started writing joke books, but then they expanded with children’s books, and it just became a huge, huge company. At first Larry was running the business, but later on my Dad and Roger got more involved, and about six years ago Putnam bought them out. My Dad still writes; he’ll be seventy-seven this year. He decided he enjoyed publishing and wanted to open up his own publishing company with Larry; Roger had since passed on. They call it Tallfellow; my dad is 6’ 3” and Larry’s just a head below. God bless my wife; she works with my Dad. They’re getting some books out—not a lot. One that they’re actually re-publishing is very funny, called *A Martian Wouldn’t Say That*. It is actually a bunch of indiscreet memos. My dad called anyone that he knew and would say “If you have a funny memo, please give it to me.” *A Martian Wouldn’t Say That* deals with a memo that actually came from the show *My Favorite Martian*. The memo basically said, “The dialogue on Page 5: a Martian wouldn’t say that!” <laughter> One of the other memos was from a company that was going to make a movie about the Bible. A memo came back, “Will the movie be based on the book?” <laughter> I’m not making this up. <laughter> They published this on a small scale and it did really well. Now they’re going to re-release the first one, and my dad’s starting to collect some new memos for next year. In fact on our show, I was asking one of our writers, “If you guys get any memos, let me know.” One of the memos that came in—I kid you not, and I don’t know if I’m quoting it one-hundred-percent correct—but it said, “Make sure the implements of torture have no product placement on them.” <much laughter> You can’t write this stuff; you can’t make this up. This stuff is priceless. Once I know when they’re re-releasing it, I’ll get in touch and make sure

you guys know. It’s called *A Martian Wouldn’t Say That* and it’s hilarious. {ed. note: *A Martian Wouldn’t Say That* is now available from Tallfellow Press, ISBN 0-9676061-5-2}

Q: I want to know the about the “Memento Mori” episode of *The X-Files*, specifically about the scene in the hallway; the kiss—the way it was shot and the way it aired.

Michael: Here’s what happened. I think Rob Bowman directed that one. For those of you who aren’t *X-Files* fans, there was a scene in this particular episode where Scully had cancer and Mulder came to see her in the hospital. They kissed, but it wasn’t a sexual kiss, it was out of concern and the scene really worked. When Rob shot it, he actually protected himself and shot it with and without the kiss. I said, “I’m going to cut it with the kiss.” Rob said, “Chris Carter won’t go for it.” I said “You know what? I know he wouldn’t go for it, but let’s give it a shot.” Chris had the final say, and he said, “No.”

Q: Rumor has it that Chris Carter went ballistic?

Michael: No. Not at all. He was totally cool. He just said, “Listen, I don’t want to do that yet.” We tried to say, “It’s not a sexual kiss. Scully’s got cancer; they’re partners.” I knew it was a battle I was not going to win, but he was not mad at all.

Q: Can you tell us if there were ever whole scenes cut out?

Michael: I’m trying to remember if there were whole scenes dropped. Sometimes lines here and there were dropped. I can’t remember in the series’ that I’ve done where we literally had to drop a whole scene. In *The X-Files*, I do remember where Scully’s brother was introduced in an episode I did, and then they decided they didn’t want to introduce him at that point. That was a huge storyline. A huge hospital scene was gone. For whatever reason, they introduced him later down the line. But in *Quantum Leap*, I don’t remember where a whole scene was going to be dropped and change the story structure.

I do remember a time when Don Bellisario amazed me—I was shocked. I think it was a scene in the episode “It’s a Wonderful Leap,” where Sam leapt into a cabdriver. There was a scene in the office with Sam and Al talking. Don said “Okay, I want to cut out all this dialogue.” I said, “If you cut all that out, everything (in the background) will be reversed. They

walked around and they would now be in different places.” Don said, “You’ll never know. The backgrounds are very similar, and you’ll never know.” And sure enough, he cut out whatever was in the middle of the scene and you have no idea they changed places. Don had this knack for knowing just what to cut if the show was, for instance, five minutes and thirty-two seconds heavy. He would come down with a bunch of notes and say, “Take out five minutes and thirty two seconds!” And he could do it.

Q: What are some of your favorite shows or movies?

Michael [laughing]: I’m probably the worst person to watch TV with. My favorite shows right now are on HBO. I love *The Sopranos*; I like a good story. There are some shows that aren’t my cup of tea but I understand why they do well. Unfortunately, with the kids and homework, by the time I sit down to watch, it’s pretty late. I enjoy action, the type of shows I’m working on: *The Sopranos*, a series called *Oz*, and *The West Wing* are good.



Photo by Jo Fox

I probably do it subconsciously, but I’ll be watching TV or a movie with my wife, and I’ll say, “Did you see that? Can you believe it? The hand was up here and now the hand is down there!” <laughter> It drives me up the wall! “You didn’t see that? There’s clouds, and now there’s blue sky?” That’s what I do. It is hard sometimes for me to watch a movie because I’m so picky. I do try to remove myself. It’s kind of fun now that they are re-running *Tour of Duty* on TNT. It brings back all these memories of the late 80’s.

Sometimes early in my career, I would watch stuff I did and say, “Aw, I should have done this. I should have done that.” But do you know what? It’s okay. It’s only television. No one’s going to die.

I think for me if a show is well written that’s important. Case in point: not one original cast member is on *Law and Order* anymore, and it’s in its tenth year! Anyone can be replaced. If you have good writing, the show will go on. *Law and Order* is so well written that they can bring in new characters and keep it going.

It’s great to be on a hit show, but you never know if you want to stay that long. One woman I know has been on *The X-Files* since the beginning, and it’s been seven years. I heard she was moving on this year, because she realized she was out of touch with people. *The X-files* could end one day and she should probably start getting back out there. You want to make sure people remember you. It is always good to be on a hit show, but you have to keep your ears open because it’s always changing.

Q: What is the story behind the re-edit of the last episode of *Quantum Leap* (“Mirror Image”)?

Michael: I don’t know. I did not cut the final episode. I think Randy Wiles did that one. My last episode was the one about Elvis, “Memphis Melody,” which was two before the final. I don’t know. Sorry. Great last question though! <laughter>

Ed. Note: Many thanks to Jo Fox for her video footage, which was an immense help in preparing this transcript. Due to space limitations, the text of this transcript had to be somewhat condensed and transposed, but no questions were omitted.—SAM.

QL on Sciography

Producers of Sci-Fi Channel’s *Sciography* chose *Quantum Leap* for the second installment of the series, airing on August 13, 2000. The one-hour episode features new and extensive interviews with Don and Deborah, as well as Scott, and the ever-elusive Dean. Leapers from the early days of *Quantum Leap*’s NBC network struggles and people involved in the series also appeared. The producers were even able to get former NBC entertainment chairman Warren Littlefield to admit he made a mistake in canceling the series before its time. Since *Quantum Leap* is one of Sci-Fi Channel’s favorite series (and ours), it might be nice to thank them for their continued support. Write to: Robin Bennett—Audience Services, Sci-Fi Channel, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

Season Five Quiz (Part Nine)

by Betsy Brodie Roberts

Episode #95: Mirror Image

1. Who and where was Sam?
2. What was special about this leap's date?
3. What did Sam do to fix Al's past?
4. Who said: "God Bless, Sam."?

Answers after the QL episode guide.

QUANTUM LEAP
THE (PEN)ULTIMATE EPISODE GUIDE:
SEASON FIVE (PART NINE)
 researched and written by Karen Funk Blocher
 screen captures by Billie Mason and Karen Funk Blocher

THE EPISODES:

EPISODE #95: Mirror Image

SCRIPT TITLE: Mirror Image

PRODUCTION NUMBER: 68126

SAGA CELL/CREDITS: There was no Saga Cell shown with "Mirror Image." Also, the opening titles (credits) are the ones from Season Three. This was done to give the fans the original version of the theme song again instead of the loud, annoying version. Perhaps Don Bellisario liked the Season Three titles better than the Season Four ones, or it was the first old music title sequence that he came across when he went to grab one. The Season Four titles should have been more readily available, since they were newer and in current use on USA Network. Nor had the Season Three titles been used on a *QL* commercial video as of 1993.

FIRST SHOWN: 5/11/93 RESHOWN: No

HAPPENED: 8/8/53, Cokeburg, PA (or is it?)

WRITER: Donald P. Bellisario

DIRECTOR: James Whitmore, Jr.

GUEST STARS: Bruce McGill (as Al the Bartender), John DiAquino (Tonchi), Richard Herd (Miner Ziggy, a.k.a. Simo Servonovich), W Morgan Sheppard (Bearded Gushie), Stephen McHattie (Stawpah), Mike Genovese (Mr. Collins), Susan Diol (Beth Calavicci), Dan Butler (Mutta), Dennis Wolfberg (Gooshie)

GUEST CAST: Co-Starring: Kevin McDermott (as Kruger), Ferdinand Carangelo (as Ghee), Brad

Silverman (as Pete), J D Daniels (as Kid #1), Michael Bellisario (as Kid #2), Donald P Bellisario (uncredited, as thirsty miner), James Whitmore, Jr. (uncredited, as company cop)

PLOT: Sam leaps into the doorway of a bar called Al's Place in Cokeburg, PA. He orders a Schlitz beer from the bartender, and moments later is shocked to see his own face in the mirror behind the bar. Sam is aghast at the little bit of white in his hair and the crow's feet around his eyes. But that's minor compared to his overall shock at the discovery that he's leaped in as himself—his present-day self, standing in a bar at the very hour of his own birth.



Sam sees himself in the mirror for the first time in five years
 Screen capture by KFB

An elderly, bearded miner comes in, drinks a shot of whiskey, and leaves. His breath is terrible. Al the Bartender remarks that he should have warned Sam about Gushie's breath. Sam is shocked again: another Al (Albert, but not Calav Ricci) is talking to Sam about another Gushie (Gooshie) with bad breath! Sam runs outside, but the Bearded Gushie is gone. Just outside the bar are two kids with their bikes. They look just like Josh and Martin Ellroy, Jr., the half-brother sons of a bigamist Sam once leaped into.

Sam confronts Al the Bartender about this string of apparent coincidences. Al the Bartender is amused but unhelpful. Then a hunched-over, arthritic, bitter miner named Stawpah comes in. He is suspicious of Sam, who is obviously not a miner. The next miner who comes in looks exactly like Frank LaMotta, Jimmy's brother. Sam hugs him and calls him Frank, but this guy's name is Tonchi, and like Frank he has a brother who is "a little slow." Tonchi is defensive about his brother Pete. Sam has a minor confrontation with Tonchi and Stawpah over Stawpah's accusation that Sam might be an inspector for the state Liquor Control Board, but Al defuses the situation by reminding Tonchi not to be late for work. In trying to establish his identity Sam pulls his own wallet out of his pocket and sees his own holographic New Mexico driver's license. He obviously can't show that to the miners, but for Sam it's another revelation.



Tonchi looks just like Frank LaMotta
Screen capture by Billie Mason

Back at Project Quantum Leap, Al Calav Ricci and the unbearded Gooshie are standing in a Waiting Room with no leapee in it. Ziggy has projected a 99.2% probability that Sam has leaped into himself, somewhere in time. With no one in the Waiting Room to establish a starting point for their search for Sam, Gooshie isn't certain that Ziggy can find him at all.

As Sam nurses his third beer, he meets a miner who looks like Captain Galaxy (Moe Stein). The miner's name is Ziggy. He and Sam discuss tv and

whether the Ziggy Sam knows is a girl. Ziggy is given to malapropisms: "iodine" for "ionosphere," "cabbages" for "cartridges," and "BVD" for "KGB." Stawpah is repeatedly unpleasant to Ziggy, calling him a dummy.

Stawpah tells Al the Bartender that Sam isn't who he pretends to be, and wonders why Sam is there. Al says that perhaps Sam is just there to have a beer. Al says something about things going "a little ka-ka." Once again Sam confronts Al the Bartender about the coincidences. Al offers to answer Sam's question about why he's here if Sam hits the jackpot on a nickel-a-play numbers board. Sam doesn't win the jackpot, so Al says Sam will have to figure things out for himself.

Back at the Project, Al prepares to enter the Imaging Chamber as Gooshie prepares to have Ziggy run a nano-search for Sam. Gooshie admits that this could take a month. Al can't see himself standing in the Imaging Chamber for a month as images swirl around him, but they try it anyway.

Sam is starting to loosen up at the bar, telling the miners that the Russians won't drop the H-bomb on Pittsburgh and jokingly claiming to be a spy for the BVD. Stawpah picks on Ziggy again, saying that he's too dumb to spell his own name. Ziggy's real name is Simo Servonovich, but his spelling doesn't get past the letter i in Simo. Sam asks how Simo got the nickname Ziggy. The miners explain that a donkey threw Simo into a steam radiator during a donkey basketball game for charity, after which he ziggged and zagged for a week. Al the Bartender nicknamed him Ziggy. Al is responsible for all the miners' nicknames: Baba, Ghee, Nuzo, Munja, Herky, Jughead, Snags, and Mutta. Gooshie is not a nickname, according to Stawpah.

Suddenly an alarm whistle goes off. Everybody but Al rushes to the mine. A hundred feet of tunnel have collapsed, trapping Tonchi and Pete. The foreman, Kruger, says that they can't go back in until they ventilate the shaft, which presents a fire hazard due to the gas inside. Tonchi and Pete will have to wait. Stawpah tells the mine superintendent, Collins, that Sam is the state safety inspector from the Bureau of Mines, and Sam does not contradict him. Ventilation will take 48 hours, and Tonchi and Pete, if they're still alive, probably don't have that long. The miners all want to risk their lives and the chance of fire in order to save their friends, but Collins is not willing to do so, and closes the mine.

Sam asks Stawpah why he told Collins that Sam was a mine inspector. Stawpah wanted to make Collins sweat, and wants to find a way to get the miners out "this time." Stawpah says they are alive, cold and wet and scared in the darkness as the water level rises around them. Asked how he knows all this, Stawpah says, "I been there, too many time."

Al the Bartender tells Sam he's not there to save Tonchi and Pete. He also says that a good bartender has to be "part philosopher, part psychiatrist, part psychic." Sam wants to talk philosophy: "Why am I here?" Al doesn't think Sam's main reason for being there is to help the miners, but concedes, "Who knows what Don Quixote can accomplish?" Sam accuses Al of being a bartender "who knows everything." Al says that only God knows everything, and laughs off the idea that he's God without actually denying it.

Stawpah thinks that he and Sam are both there to help Tonchi and Pete. "Be safety inspector," he tells Sam. Sam goes back to the mine, where he tells the company cop guarding the shaft that Collins has authorized a rescue attempt after talking to Sam's boss. Sam waves a piece of paper at the cop that conveniently falls down the shaft as the cop tries to take it from him. The cop goes to straighten things out with a phone call, but does not prevent the miners from loading onto the elevator in the meantime. Sam is willing to go down with them, but the miners say he's done enough.



Stawpah

Screen capture by Billie Mason

Back in the Imaging Chamber, Al is getting dizzy and woozy from the swirling images. Al has a hunch that wherever Sam is, it's his birthday. Gooshie narrows the search to Sam's birthdays, starting with his first birthday (i.e., when Sam turned one) on 8/8/54.

The bar is deserted now except for Stawpah, Sam, and Al the Bartender. Sam is talking to the bartender about his friend Al, the Sancho Panza to Sam's Don Quixote. There's nothing they won't do for each other—except for the time Sam was unwilling to break the rules to try to save Al's marriage to Beth.

Suddenly the bar is filled with jubilant miners, including Tonchi and Pete. Sam gives part of the credit to Stawpah, who smiles for the first time, lifts his glass, and leaps out, leaving an empty table. None of the miners saw Stawpah leap. They don't remember Stawpah at all. The bearded Gushie comes in. "Stawpah was a Ukrainian," he tells Sam. Gushie and Sam agree on Stawpah's arthritis and its cause, and

what a great loader Stawpah was when he worked the Marianna mine. But according to Gushie, Sam couldn't have just seen Stawpah: he died in '33.

Back in the Imaging Chamber, Al is in danger of vomiting. Gooshie has already tried all of Sam's birthdays from 1954 to 2199. Wherever Sam is, it's not his birthday, unless Al meant the actual day of Sam's birth in 1953. Al staggers back into the Imaging Chamber, convinced that it must be exactly when Sam is.

Al the bartender remembers Stawpah, but gives Sam no better explanation than "that's the way it is." Al isn't sure Sam's ready for more. Suddenly Sam notices that Gushie's reflection is that of a young, unbearded man. Nor do Tonchi, Pete and Ziggy match their reflections.

Sam accuses Al of being the one who's been leaping him around all this time. "I wouldn't say that," Al says. Al points at Sam's reflection. "He's been leaping you through time," Al says. Sam denies this vehemently. "Why did you create Project Quantum Leap, Sam?" Al asks. "Why did you want to travel through time? To make the world a better place?"

"Of course. To make the world a better place."

"To put right what once went wrong?"

"Yes, but not one life at a time."

Al tells Sam that he's accomplished a lot more than he thinks he has. The lives he touched, touched others. "You've done a lot of good, Sam Beckett, and you can do more."

"I don't want to do more," Sam says. "I want to go home."

Al tells Sam that he can go home whenever he wants, if he accepts that he controls his own destiny.

Ziggy finally gets a lock on Sam. Al Calavicci calls out to Sam, who rushes out of the bar to talk to Al outside. Sam tries to explain about Al the Bartender being the God, Time, Fate or Whatever that is responsible for leaping Sam around, despite his claim that Sam's the one who's been doing it. Sam tells Al about the miner who looks like Moe Stein, and the ones who look like Frank and Jimmy LaMotta, and the miner named Gushie, and the dead miner who leaped out. Al is alarmed by Sam's agitated state and the bizarre things he's saying. Al has an uncle named Stawpah, who was "all twisted up like a pretzel" from arthritis. Sam begins to laugh, and can't explain why. Al leaves to figure things out with Ziggy, promising to get Sam out of this, whatever it takes.

Al the Bartender comes outside as Al Calavicci disappears. The bartender tells Sam that he is responsible for his own life, just as a priest must take responsibility for himself as the church moves him from parish to parish. Sam points out that even a priest can quit, but Al the Bartender says that a priest can also

take a sabbatical, especially before embarking on a new and difficult assignment.

Sam wants to go home, but he can't; he has a wrong to put right for Al first.

"God bless, Sam," Al says. Sam leaps out. He's standing in Beth's home in San Diego. Beth is dancing alone to *Georgia on My Mind*. Sam calls her by name, startling her. Sam tells her he's a friend of Al's, and he has a story to tell her, a true story with a happy ending: Al's alive and coming home.

We see a leap effect over the picture of Al behind Beth, and then these words on a black background:

"Beth never remarried. She and Al have four daughters and will celebrate their 39th wedding anniversary in June. Dr. Sam Beckett never returned home."

The last shot in the series is a still photo of Sam and Al in front of Al's place. Al is in his admiral's uniform, and Sam is wearing a white shirt and brown leather jacket. The Home Theme plays as we look at this portrait of the two friends.

REAL HISTORY: Al's Place is a re-creation of Don Bellisario's father's bar, and Don has said that Bruce McGill as Al the Bartender looked a lot like Don's father. The photo in the end credits of a man and his son in front of an airplane is of Don Bellisario and his dad.

INSIDE JOKE: Dressed as a miner, Don Bellisario cadges several drink in the bar at the beginning of Act Two, and puts them on Munja's tab. I can't prove it, or quite place the face, but I think that the miner who finishes a game of pinball and then leaves the bar is also someone I used to see around the Belisarius offices.

MUSIC NOTES: *Accentuate the Positive* plays as Sam walks in, but I've been unable to identify the artist or artists. Bing Crosby recorded it, but it's not Bing. It's almost certainly a black artist or group, more jazz than doo-wop oriented. Nor can I identify the swing instrumental we hear while Stawpah is talking about how much coal he used to load before his arthritis. Louis Armstrong plays and sings (but I don't recognize the song) as we hear how Ziggy got his nickname. The Duke Ellington classic *Take the A Train* plays as Sam discovers that Bearded Gushie's mirror image is of someone else. Another generic swing instrumental follows. *Georgia on My Mind* is heard both as Beth Calavici dances in her home and as Sam leaps-in to tell her that Al's alive.

BIO/SAM: Sam's wallet is a nylon cloth one with a Velcro fastener, a kind that was very common in the 1980s. His New Mexico driver's license, which expired in 1998, had a holographic picture on it, a final bit of evidence that Sam's reality is a little more futuristic than our own in the use of technology. According to the driver's license, Sam was 6'0" and

weighed 175 pounds when the license was issued. His hair color was listed as brown, his eyes as green (these were both abbreviations). His address was listed as a P.O. Box in Stallions Springs, NM, presumably a mail drop not far from the Project in Stallions Gate.

When the episode first aired, some leapers worried that Sam didn't come home because he was dead. In a 1993 interview with Adina Ringler, Don Bellisario hastened to reassure fans that this was not the case.

BIO/AL: Al claims to have always wanted his own bar. Again in 1993, Bellisario said that even with Al getting Beth back, he's still Sam's friend and Observer at Project Quantum Leap.

AL'S WOMEN: In two minutes (plus whatever we don't see on screen of Sam's conversation with Beth), Sam wipes out four of Al's marriages, restores his marriage to Beth as one that's lasted nearly 39 years so far, and gives Al and Beth four daughters. There's no official basis for establishing the daughters' names, but I like to think that three of them are named Ruthie, Sharon and Maxine, after the wives that never were.



Calavici Family Portrait

Note the huge floor vase filled with calla lilies {ed. note: Presumably this was the pic used in the alternate version even though the camera never pans wide enough to include the vase.}

BODY AND SOUL: Right, so where did Sam get his clothes (if they were his clothes) and his wallet? In a way it's a repeat of the Fabulous Leaping Clothes problem from "The Leap Back," except that this time there's no extra surge of energy from the simo-leap or the shock treatment.

However, given that this version of Cokeburg, PA is filled with familiar faces and names from Sam's life and leaps, presided over by a bartender who knows everything about Sam, it's hard to evade the idea that Sam has leaped here into a place that's more subjective than real. It is extremely unlikely that Al's Place and its patrons (let alone its proprietor) literally exist in Sam's reality, at least not as Sam encounters them. It's

more like a vision, a place brought into temporary existence for Sam's benefit; or, more likely, a real place overlaid with unreal or remembered elements from G/T/W's imagination and/or Sam's subconscious. (This would be why some of the more problematic characters in the bar do not appear in the mirror.) Much of what Sam sees and hears (except for Al Calaviccini) is more or less created by God/Time/Fate/Whatever, a.k.a. Al the Bartender, possibly in collaboration with Sam's own psyche. Sam himself says in voice-over, "I no longer knew what was real and what was imagined, and if imagined, whose mind was imagining it: mine, or someone else's." If some of what Sam experiences is more imagined than real, it doesn't have to conform to the science of quantum leaping, cause and effect, and statistical probability. Nothing (including Sam's wallet) is or needs to be literally explainable, save by saying, as Al the Bartender does, that "That's the way it is" is the best explanation." As an inveterate explainer of the Bellisario Laws of Quantum Leaping, it's hard for me not to take that statement personally!

THE PROJECT: Without someone in the Waiting Room to provide a starting point, it is extremely difficult for Ziggy to lock on to Sam so that Al can talk to him. If Al's Place (at least as experienced by Sam) is not part of the "real world," then it should have been impossible for Ziggy to find Sam at all. Yet Sam's neuron-meson connection with Al and the Project was able, just barely, to allow Ziggy to place Al's hologram in that remarkable bar in Cokeburg, by doing a nano-search based on Al's hunch that wherever and whenever he was, it was Sam's birthday. I think that that Sam and Al's reality did contain an Al's Place in Cokeburg in 1953, although not everyone Sam met there was wearing his own name or face from Sam's perspective.

It's strange that neither Sam nor Al knows what it looks like to leap out. When Al gets too close to the transmitter in "Good Morning, Peoria" he glows with blue light, and thinks for a moment that he's leaping. And didn't they see each other leap at the end of "Shock Theater?" Maybe Al really doesn't get to see Sam's leaps because the image around him fades as Sam does it—all past evidence to the contrary. That would mean that the only people who have ever seen Sam leap are we the viewers, and possibly Gooshie when Sam first leaped out of the Accelerator Chamber.

The whole Project concept breaks down if the future leap idea in the alternate ending (see below) ever takes place. Why would Sam leap into the future? Is Sam going to put right what may possibly go wrong later? How can Ziggy research what hasn't happened yet? It could be argued that even a future situation could go wrong without Sam (and now Al) there to fix it. But unless Ziggy somehow accesses a database from farther in the future than Sam's leap (a future version of

Ziggy?), we have no way of knowing what Sam is there to fix, and what the original history will be.

Still, it may be technically possible for Sam to leap to the future, especially if he leaps into his descendent, just as he once leaped into his ancestor). Don Bellisario once said that the moment you tell him he "can't" do something he'll try to do it, because he enjoys writing his way out of corners. NBC promos during the 1992 Summer Olympics implied a future leap, and Gooshie had Ziggy check Sam's birthdays all the way through the end of the 21st century in "Mirror Image."

Sam might have leaped well into the future at the end of "Mirror Image" had NBC gotten its way. Don Bellisario announced at the Second Annual Quantum Leap Convention (1993) that the network wanted Don to leap Sam into the future permanently, with a young sidekick—or maybe Al—leaping along with him. Despite the fact that this would ruin the entire premise of the show, the idea of a future leap got as far as the alternate ending that Don wrote to "Mirror Image." It's actually a brilliant bit of writing, and yes, one future leap with Sam and Al together could be a lot of fun. In a dual leap situation, Al would be the Swiss-cheesed novice leaper, and Sam once again the old pro, but without the memory edge and Al libido of "The Leap Back." Each could bring something to the solution of the leap that neither of them could handle alone. It could work—once—but the dynamic of the show/movies would be ruined if it were a continuous situation.

Incidentally, Deborah Pratt told my husband John and myself way back in 1990 that they were thinking of having Tom Beckett go leaping after Sam! That could be neat, too—once! Then in 1993, Don told Adina Ringler that if Al joined Sam in leaping, Sammy Jo might become their Observer.

SAM BREAKS COVER: Sam doesn't have another identity to hide behind (except for the mine inspector gambit), especially with Al the Bartender, to whom he blurts out, "that's, um, me, in the mirror." Before the episode is over Sam has gone from trying to pump him for info to pouring his heart out to him.

LEAP OUT/LEAP IN: The leap-out from "Memphis Melody" is 1:20 long, about ten seconds shorter than the leap-in to "Mirror Image." There's no missing dialogue to speak of, just some vocal hesitation on Sam's part and a bit of his walking around the bar. The main difference between the two is that the leap-out begins with the obscure verse at the beginning of *Accentuate the Positive*, whereas the episode itself jumps right in with the part he actually says. "You've got to accentuate the positive/eliminate the negative..."

The leap-out from the 8/15/93 NBC rerun of "Memphis Melody" was into "Mirror Image." Unfortunately, NBC never aired *QL* again after that night, so "Mirror Image" was never rerun.

THE NAME GAME: Don Bellisario re-uses familiar actors from past *QL* episodes to provide Sam with familiar faces bearing different names. He also exposes Sam to names he knows, attached to people who may or may not look familiar. More than that, though, DPB uses names and places from his own personal past. Scriptwise, Al the Bartender says his name is "Albert. Alberto actually." The character is named after Don's father, Alberto Bellisario. It's probably safe to say that's how Al Calavici got his name also. The script also includes Herky and Sibby among the miners' nicknames. (The aired version has Herky but not Sibby.) We know these are the names of Don's old friends, part of the Bellisario Name Bank he uses from time to time in tribute to people he knows. Sibby LoNigro's name previously appeared in "Her Charm" as that of Professor Sebastian LoNigro, and Sibby and Herky were the names of teammates on Sam's Elk Ridge basketball team. I'd be willing to bet that some of the other miners' nicknames also refer to friends of Don Bellisario, possibly going all the way back to his Cokeburg childhood. The script also includes a character nicknamed Skaggs, which was the name of one of the cops in "M.I.A." (On screen in "Mirror Image" the name sounds more like Snags.)

This is not unusual for a *QL* script, but I'd like to point out one last time that such important name spellings as Gooshie and Calavici are inconsistent from episode to episode. The little guy with bad breath is Gooshie in the pilot script and the story guideline, but Gushie in the "Mirror Image" script and elsewhere. I'm sticking to Gooshie as the canonical spelling, although I'm willing to concede the Gushie spelling as being correct for the bearded guy from the Ukraine. Similarly, Al and Beth officially have the last name Calavici, but it's spelled Calavicchi in the script. So if I slip and misspell Al's last name from time to time, at least I'm in good company!



Richard Herd as Miner Ziggy
Screen capture by KFB

Miner Ziggy (as his dialogue is labeled) is reported in the script as having the real name Simo Servonovich. I have seen at least two cast listings that spell the name

very differently, as Seymour Ziganovich. Sorry, but this is wrong. If you listen closely, Richard Herd is definitely saying Simo Servonovich, which is consistent with his starting to spell his name S-I- instead of S-E-Y-. Also, Servonovich is a much more credible name than Ziganovich, which works the letter Z in unnecessarily given that the nickname is based on zigging and zagging, not on Simo's actual name.

In the script, Tonchi and Pete are also referred to as the Palermo brothers.

SCRIPT TO SCREEN: This episode ran long, so there's a bunch of stuff in the script 2/12/93 FR script that didn't make it into the episode. Right off the bat, Al the Bartender doesn't get to offer to help Sam when he enters the bar in the aired version, and there's some written description of Sam looking around the bar at things we don't see him look at.

In the script, Sam's voice-over reaction to seeing his own face is as follows: "No reflection could shock me more than my own. It shattered all the quantum truths I'd come to accept as gospel. It was as if someone told Einstein that E didn't equal MC squared." In the script, Sam tries to explain away his reaction to the reflection, and Al makes a reference to vampires not looking in mirrors, either.

The script also has a scene between Sam, Al the Bartender and Miner Ziggy. Al tells Sam to let Ziggy treat him to a beer, because "It's bad luck to buy on your birthday." Ziggy has Al use the change from the round of beer to play the numbers using Sam's birthdate. (The bettor wins \$20 if the number matches the number of shares traded on the stock market, as reported in the Post-Gazette the following day.) Sam admits to having been born in '53, although he later claims to have been born in 1853. Ziggy does not question this obvious impossibility, and Sam eventually apologizes for lying to Ziggy about this. Sam also accuses Al the Bartender of not blinking an eye when Sam said he was born in 1953, and of knowing why Sam's here. Al says that Sam is here "to get a beer."

In the script, Al calls Sam "a white knight, a Lone Ranger, a Don Quixote." Sam wishes for his Sancho, and Al tells him, "He's coming." Unlike on screen, Al directly denies being who Sam thinks he might be: "Sorry, Sam. I'd like the job, but I'm not God."

Stawpah flips an Indian-headed nickel in the script to determine whether the mine will catch fire if they go in after Tonchi and Pete. He does nothing of the sort on screen. And it's only in the script, not on screen, that we learn that the company cop can't reach Collins by phone because the wires have been cut.

In the script, the flashback used to show Al's loss of Beth, and Sam's remorse about it, is the scene in which Al tells Sam that Beth was his one shot at true love. On screen we see instead Al dancing with Beth to

Georgia on My Mind. Not only is this one of the most memorable scenes in the whole series, but it also fits in well with Sam's leap to Beth's house, where the record is still playing and Beth is dancing alone.

As Sam talks about not having saved Al's marriage, the script has Al the Bartender questioning whether Sam has always played by the rules and whether that's always a good thing. "Didn't you ever test the limits?" he asks.

After Tonchi and Pete are rescued, the script has Al the Bartender using a cop analogy to explain why Sam hasn't leaped home: "You know how they can't turn it off? The shift ends, but they take one more call, and then one more." Sam denies that he's like that. Al agrees that Sam misses home, loved ones and a normal life, but "be honest with yourself. How long could you take it after what you've been doing?" Sam takes Al to mean that he's stuck doing this for the rest of his life, but Al says, both in the script and on the screen, that Sam will only do this as long as he wants to.

After Sam's conversation with Al Calavicci, he has one last talk with Al the Bartender. In the script he finally accepts that he's leaping himself. As for breaking the rules, Al the Bartender tells him that he might get away with it once. Sam leaps out immediately (without the lovely "God bless" line we see in the aired episode), and arrives in time to see Al still dancing with Beth. On screen, that's the flashback, but Sam's actual arrival is a minute or so later.

Right after Sam tells Beth that Al's alive, the script veers completely away from the aired version of the episode. In the script, the "leaping" photo becomes a picture of Al, Beth and their four daughters, with other family photos surrounding it. Al and Beth sit together in an overstuffed chair in their quarters at Project Quantum Leap, talking about Al's bizarre conversation with Sam outside of Al's Place in Cokeburg. Al says he didn't realize at the time that Sam was in Cokeburg as himself. Now he's leaped, and there's still nobody in the Waiting Room, so they're once again back to running a nano-second search, which could take months. Beth points out that it didn't take months for Al to find him in Cokeburg. She's confident that Al can find him again, because "that's what friends are for." That's the end of Act Four in the script. There's nothing about Sam not returning home.

In his 1993 conversation with Adina Ringler, Don Bellisario said that the original ending of the script had not worked for him. The sentences we see on the screen at the end were ones that came to him and "felt right." He said he would never have written a "pat" ending with everything resolved and "everyone hugging each other." He prefers to leave a jumping-off point for any future sequels.

Such a jumping-off point does exist for "Mirror Image." There's an alternate ending to the script,

prefaced by a page that says, "The following scene is an example of how we could cliffhang into the 1993/1994 season." In this alternate ending, Al tells Beth of his hunch that Sam has leaped into the future, far beyond his own lifetime. The only way Al can think of to catch up with Sam is to leap himself, targeting Al's Place so that he can go talk to the bartender there. Beth approves of the plan despite the danger of losing Al, saying, "Anyone who came back from Vietnam can come back from anywhere." Al leaps to Al's Place, where the regulars are listening to the Pirates as they slug out hit after hit. Al is a little Swiss-cheesed, and his mention of a female Ziggy leads to the miners joking that Al must know Sam's Ziggy, the one who's an ugly woman. Al tries to get information from Al the Bartender, who offers to let Al gamble using the punchboard in order to get information. No need for our readers to gamble. Turn to page 40 for the conclusion of the cliffhanger and other related remarks. ALUMNI WATCH: The majority of the guest cast of "Mirror Image" appeared in at least one other *QL* episode. Two of them actually appeared in the pilot episode, which lends a nice sense of symmetry to the series. Several of them have been on *JAG*, a couple of them have been on *Seinfeld*, and most of them have been on one or more *Star Trek* series, *MacGyver* and/or *The X-Files*. Here are the particulars:



Bruce McGill as Al the bartender

Screen capture by Billie Mason

Bruce McGill (Al the Bartender) was born Bruce Travis McGill in San Antonio in 1950 (I just thought I'd throw that in here). His film credits include playing "D Day" in *Animal House* (1978), Walter Hagen in *The Legend of Bagger Vance* (2000), and a few dozen movies in between, including *Silkwood* (1983) and the 1994 time travel movie *Timecop*. He's about to appear as Donny Osmond's father in a tv movie, and as Ralph Houk in a tv movie called *61** [sic], a.k.a. *Home Run Race*), about Roger Maris' successful but traumatic attempt to break Babe Ruth's home run record. He reprised his *Animal House* role as Daniel Simpson Day in the 1979 tv series *Delta House*, played Billy Clyde

Pucket in the 1980 tv series *Semi-Tough*, and starred as Joe Vitale in the 1995 tv series *Live Shot*. He was a semi-regular on *MacGyver*, playing Jack Dalton in many episodes, and he's guest-starred on *Babylon 5* and *Star Trek: Voyager*. More importantly to Leapers, he played Dr. "Weird Ernie" Ernst in the *QL* pilot episode, a.k.a. "Genesis."

John D'Aquino (a.k.a. John Di Aquino), who plays Tonchi here, is no stranger to readers of *The Observer*. He played Frank LaMotta in "Jimmy" and in "Deliver Us from Evil," and he wrote "The Beast Within." I just ran down his credits a couple of issues ago, so I'll just mention his recurring role as Kevin Randell during the first season of 3rd *Rock from the Sun*, his co-starring role on *SeaQuest DSV*, and the fact that he played Ulysses on *Xena*.

Richard Herd (Miner Ziggy) is a former Vice President of the Screen Actors Guild. He's done a slew of films, including *Trancers*; *Planes, Trains & Automobiles*; *Sgt. Bilko*; *All the President's Men* and *The China Syndrome*. He was also on *SeaQuest DSV*, headed up the nasty aliens in the original tv mini-series of *V*, played Captain Dennis Sheridan on *T J Hooker*, and was George's boss on *Seinfeld* and President Grover Cleveland on *The Adventures of Brisco County Jr.* He is currently appearing as Tom Paris' father, Admiral Owen Paris, in *Star Trek: Voyager*. But we know him and love him as Moe Stein, a.k.a. Captain Galaxy, from the *QL* episode "Future Boy."



Bearded Gushie and the other miners

Screen capture by KFB

W. Morgan Sheppard (a.k.a. William Morgan Sheppard) plays Bearded Gooshie here, and it's hard to recognize him under all that beard. So I was stunned to discover that he's the same actor who played pirate tv operator Blank Reg on the *Max Headroom* tv series. I can't begin to list his video game(!), tv series and film credits going all the way back to 1961, but they include the video game *Star Wars: Force Commander*, the direct-to-video animated feature *Pocahontas II*, the cartoon series *Gargoyles* and *Biker Mice from Mars*, the film *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (as a Klingon Commander), *Needful Things*, an Elvira

movie, a 1987 *Gunsmoke* revival, a tv series *The Day of the Triffids*, the miniseries *Shogun* and a walk-on in *The Elephant Man*. Whew! As for guest appearances, he's been on *JAG*, *Voyager*, *Timecop*, *Babylon 5*, *SeaQuest DSV*, *Designing Women*, *MacGyver* (twice), *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *The Professionals*. The man works!

Stephen McHattie (born Stephen McHattie Smith in Nova Scotia) played Stawpah here, in his first and last *QL* appearance. He also played Frank Coscarella in the 1998-9(?) tv series *Cold Squad*—and no, I've never heard of it, either. He also played Jimmy Murray in the 1998 series *Emily of New Moon*. He was the narrator in *BASEketball* (1998) and appeared in a bunch of films and tv movies in the 1990s, none of which ring a bell with me except *Beverly Hills Cop III*. My favorite title from among these is *Pterodactyl Woman from Beverly Hills* (1994). He was in a 1991 tv series *Scene of the Crime* and played Gabriel in the tv series *Beauty and the Beast*. He's guest-starred on *Deep Space Nine*, *JAG*, *The X-Files*, *Highlander* and *Northern Exposure*, and had a recurring role as Dr. Reston on *Seinfeld*. His tv guest credits go all the way back to *Kojak* in 1974.

Mike Genovese (a.k.a. Michael Genovese) plays the mine boss Mr. Collins. It's his second *QL* appearance, the first being as Don Geno Frascotti in "Double Identity." He played Gordie in the tv series *Port Charles*, and Detective Nuzo Pace in Don Bellisario's tv movie/unsold pilot *Crowfoot* (1995). He's played a cop on both *ER* and *The Flash*, in the movie *The Invisible Kid* and in various other projects. He was a regular on *Falcon Crest*. He's had guest appearances on *Babylon 5*, *Deep Space Nine*, four episodes of *Reasonable Doubts*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (as yet another cop) and two episodes of *T.J. Hooker*, playing different characters.

Susan Diol (Beth Calavicci) was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1964. She married former teen idol Shaun Cassidy (brother of David) in 1995, and gave birth to her first daughter in 1998. She was in the tv movie *Alien Nation: Millennium* in 1996. She played Angela Holliday on *One Life to Live* in 1993-4, and Emmy Borden on *Days of Our Lives* from 1990-1991. She was also a regular on a 1988 tv series called *Hothouse*. She played Dr. Danara Pel on two episodes of *Star Trek: Voyager*, another character in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and had a memorable appearance in a *Seinfeld* episode called "The Nose Job." But for us she made her most indelible impression as Al's first wife, Beth Calavicci, in "M.I.A."

Dan Butler (Mutta) was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1954. He was in the 1998 mini-series *From the Earth to the Moon*, and was the voice of Mr. Simmons in the tv series *Hey Arnold!* He was in the 1996 film *The Fan*, the 1992 film *Captain Ron*, and a 1992 tv series called *Frannie's Turn*. He was in *The*

Silence of the Lambs and, oddly enough, in another Hannibal Lector project called *Manhunter*, which preceded the Anthony Hopkins film by five years. Dan also played Art on *Roseanne* from 1990-2. Nowadays, however, he is best known as Robert "Bulldog" Briscoe on *Frasier*, and has also directed *Frasier*. He's had guest appearances on *Voyager* and *The X-Files*. Like most of the guest cast of "Mirror Image," Dan previously appeared on another *QL* episode. He played Jake Dorleac in "Southern Comforts," a character who was presumably named after costume designer Jean-Pierre Dorleac.

The late Dennis Wolfberg (1946-1994) made his fifth and final *QL* appearance as Gooshie in "Mirror Image." He first played Gooshie, the "little guy with bad breath" in the *QL* pilot, turning up very briefly at the beginning of the episode. A split-second shot of Dennis from the pilot, in which he's yelling out to Al about Sam leaping, made it into the *QL* opening credits for several years. If I remember correctly, that almost subliminal appearance in the credits generated enough royalties for him to qualify for the health insurance that paid for the birth of his twins in the early 1990s. Dennis had more substantial appearances as Gooshie in "The Leap Back," "Lee Harvey Oswald," and "Killin' Time." In 1993 he told us that Don Bellisario promised him that if *QL* came back, Dennis could contribute some of his own dialogue to the role in any future appearances. Cancer and NBC's Don Ohlmeyer prevented that from ever happening.

Kevin McDermott (Kruger) played Olaf in *My Stepmother Is an Alien* (1988), Al in the 1991 tv series *Dangerous Women*, and an alien baseball player on an episode *Deep Space Nine*. He's had guest appearances on *ER*, *Cheers* and *Matlock*. Ferdinand Carangelo (Ghee) had a minor role in the 1993 film *The Liar's Club*. He was in the *JAG* pilot episode, and also had guest appearances on *Sliders* and *Wings*.

Brad Silverman (Pete) was the mirror image of Jimmy in "Jimmy," in "Shock Theater" and in "Deliver Us From Evil." I have not found any other acting credits for him.

J. D. Daniels, who played one of the kids hanging around outside with their bikes, was born in 1980 in New York. So he's at least 20 years old now! His previous *QL* appearance was as Josh Ellroy in "A Tale of Two Sweeties." He has a couple of voice-over credits, most notably for the Disney series *Gargoyles*. He played Nick Griffith in the 1990-1 tv series *Going Places*, and also appeared in the 1994 tv movie *Roswell* and the Disney film *The Mighty Ducks*. His other credits include such intriguing titles as *Beanstalk*, *In Search of Dr. Seuss*, and *The Pickle*.

Michael Bellisario, who played the other kid with a bike, is Don Bellisario's son. His first *QL* appearance was as a kid at the children's table in "Camikazi Kid."

He was Billy the batboy in "Play Ball," and Martin Ellroy, Jr. in "A Tale of Two Sweeties." He played Nuzo's Son in Don Bellisario's 1988 Film *Last Rites*, appearing with his sister Troian (who played Nuzo's Daughter). Since *QL* he has appeared in over half-a-dozen episodes of *JAG*, including the pilot.

Donald P. Bellisario (uncredited miner) was the mirror image in "A Portrait for Troian," and is standing front-and-center in the curtain call at the end of "Catch a Falling Star." He's also had cameo appearances in several other shows he's produced. I believe he played a golfer in the unsold pilot *Three on a Match*; turned up in the "Father's Day" episode of *JAG*; played a hotel desk clerk in the "Faith and Begorrah" episode of *Magnum, P.I.*; and was credited as a character called Father in an episode of *Tales of the Gold Monkey* titled "A Distant Shout of Thunder."

James Whitmore, Jr. (the company cop) played the father in "8 1/2 Months," and the sheriff Sam leaps into in "Trilogy." He also directed "Mirror Image" and various other *QL* episodes.

John Cullum (John O'Malley in "Catch a Falling Star" and director of "All-Americans") told us in 2/93 that Don offered to put him in this episode as well. The fact that Cullum didn't make it into the episode is probably due to his being busy at the time playing Holling on *Northern Exposure*.

NOTES: This episode is a mess for a continuity freak like me, but I love it, largely on the basis of Sam's conversations with Al and the emotional journey he takes as a result. I also love the Miner Ziggy character.

This episode gives us one last, in-depth but confusing look at the G/T/W concept. G/T/W, also known as GTFW, is an abbreviation for "God, or Time, or Fate, or Whoever's [or "Whatever's"] leaping me around," as Sam says in one form or another in several different episodes. There are enough "G/T/W" type references to imply that Sam (and Don Bellisario) generally haven't been willing to make a final, no-way-out-of-it determination that God is responsible for leaping Sam around in time.

Donald P. Bellisario has been quoted as saying, "When I started this show, I said 'God or fate or time is leaping Sam,' and I was told by a lot of people, 'You can't say it's God leaping him around because it will turn a lot of people off.' When we did the research, something like 40 percent of the people said it would turn them off to the show because it implies that the show would be preachy." Ironically, other series during and after *Quantum Leap*, notably *Highway to Heaven* and *Touched by an Angel*, have successfully incorporated an overtly religious premise (i.e. angels) into their programs. However, it is also true that many Leapers, myself among them, would have been less enthused with *Quantum Leap* had the "unknown force" eventually mentioned in the saga cell been firmly

established from the outset as God, period.

Don Bellisario and Scott Bakula have both offered the opinion that Al the Bartender in “Mirror Image” is in fact God, and the character did not deny this outright (although he did deny it in the script). Sam Beckett’s own opinion was that Al the Bartender is G/T/W, but once again Sam failed to completely discount the Time/Fate/Whatever part of the equation.

The Whoever/Whatever possibility has been speculated to be everything from a personified Fate, specifically Al the Bartender, to aliens, to Sam Beckett’s own subconscious; or, more cynically but quite true, as Donald P. Bellisario himself. As the show’s creator and executive producer, Don Bellisario was and is as close to being the show’s *auteur* in the cinematic sense as is possible for television. As such, he is the real-world “unknown force” driving Sam from destination to destination. Al the Bartender (whose bar is based on the one owned by Don Bellisario’s father many years ago) is a likely spokesman for Don’s view of what is “really” going on with Sam’s leaping.

Al the Bartender claims that Sam is in fact leaping himself around, and can go home whenever he accepts this truth and chooses to do so. But even though Sam has a choice in whether he continues to leap, it is apparent that there is also a G/T/W directing when and where Sam leaps. Just as (to borrow Al the Bartender’s priest analogy) a priest might be reassigned to different parishes at the discretion of a bishop. But how to solve the problems the priest finds in that parish, whether to request a transfer or a sabbatical, and even whether to quit entirely are all up to the priest. Sam has similar prerogatives and responsibilities. G/T/W may choose the wrong that needs righting, but Sam must decide how best to do it once he gets there. And like the priest, even Sam can quit—but Sam is as emotionally committed to helping others as the average priest is to his respective calling, and neither is going to quit lightly or easily. As long as Sam continues to put the needs of others ahead of his own desires, he will never return home.



Is Sam leaping himself around?
Screen capture by Billie Mason

Whatever or Whoever G/T/W is, Sam is essentially a willing pawn in G/T/W’s game, and would never undo the good he’s done by preventing that first leap. If he did, he would lose Donna, Tom, and Sammy Jo, and all the people he’s helped would no longer have a better life. I agree with Don Bellisario, who in an early Q&A session once pointed to Sam’s attitude in the pilot after he got to talk to his Dad. As Sam says in that episode, Quantum Leaping “isn’t such a bad deal after all.” Even if Sam accepts the idea that he can leap home whenever he accepts responsibility for his leaps and chooses to do so, he’s going to keep leaping anyway, at least for a while longer. This is partly because he enjoys helping people, partly because his altruism won’t let him place his own needs ahead of those of others, and partly because this is who Sam Beckett is now, far more than the quantum physicist he was before he leaped. Quantum Leaping has become his life’s work. On the other hand, the line, “Dr. Sam Beckett never returned home” is a bit extreme, and upset may fans when the episode first aired. Being a time travel show, however, this statement is subject to change as Sam does things that affect his own future as well as his past.

Oh, and one more thought. If Al the Bartender is indeed God, then he is perfectly capable of making arrangements as much as fifty years before Sam’s arrival in Cokeburg to people the town with names and faces that will be familiar to Sam. On the other hand, guest stars on “Mirror Image” have mentioned a theory that the Cokeburg PA in that episode was a mystical waystation through which real people passed. Perhaps in some sense, Frank, Jimmy, and Moe Stein really did make a stop at Al’s Place. Don Bellisario pretty much confirmed this in the 1993 interview.

COMING NEXT:

UNPRODUCED EPISODES, PART I ☼

Season Five Quiz (Part Nine) Answers

Episode #95: Mirror Image

1. He was himself in Cokeburg, PA
2. It was the date and the time he was born.
3. He saves Beth and Al’s marriage by telling Beth that Al was alive.
4. Al the bartender

For more trivia, visit this website:

<http://www.sassworks.com/chatter/trivia/index.html>

ABOUT THAT ALTERNATE ENDING FOR "MIRROR IMAGE"

by Sharon Major

Those lucky enough to have seen "Mirror Image" with the alternate ending, will readily agree it should have been the ending that aired that night in May of 1993. Neither ending provided "all the answers" as NBC's promos promised, yet on every level the alternate ending was much more satisfying than "Sam Beckett never returned home."

I will never forget the very first IndyLeap the weekend of August 8, 1993. Coming to Indianapolis with my daughter Jenna, not knowing any of the other 60 or so attendees, and watching "Mirror Image" so soon after *Quantum Leap's* cancellation, made me feel even a bit more isolated. Bracing ourselves for the final heartbreaking moments, we realized that this was not quite what we had just so recently seen on television. Instead here was a family photograph of Beth and Al, surrounded by four lovely daughters. The air in the room was absolutely still as everyone held their breath, hoping the image would not evaporate. Then the silence changed to cheers and applause, acclaiming this to be the "right" ending for "Mirror Image"—and if it has to be—the end of the series. The open ending left us with the feeling that, although we did not know where Sam was (or wasn't), everything was nevertheless "put right."

Reading the script for "Mirror Image" was an even bigger treat. At the end were the cliffhanger pages that Don wrote in preparation for a possible sixth season on NBC. Whether network executives ever saw the possible story arc that Don envisioned, or whether these scenes might have been filmed (and are now lying in a vault somewhere) is still speculation. This teaser for the further adventures of Sam and Al was "pure *Quantum Leap*," reminiscent of the leap-out after "Shock Theater" when Sam and Al exchange places. Each teaser is almost comical, relieving the tension of those final climactic minutes. But more than that, they heighten the viewer's expectation for whatever might come next. Even if we are never certain what the prospects may be, it's a pleasant feeling knowing there is Something.

"Mirror Image"

Alternate Ending and Cliffhanger

by Donald P. Bellisario

Condensed by Jim Rondeau*

After the hold on the portrait of Al and Beth, which widened to include the entire family, the script calls for the camera to pan to other family photos, until we see that we're in Al's den at Project Quantum Leap. Beth and Al are there, Al sitting in an overstuffed chair, smoking his cigar, looking at a picture of him and Sam.

Sam is still missing. He's still himself, they've realized, because the Waiting Room is still empty. Al's unhappy because he thinks it'll take months and months to locate Sam again, somewhere in time, if even then.

BETH: Why months? It didn't take you months to find him.

OBSERVER: I made a lucky guess.

BETH: Luck, Admiral Calavicci, had nothing to do with it. The two of you are so close, it makes me envious. (beat) You'll find him.

OBSERVER: How can you be so damned sure?

BETH: Because that's what friends are for.

The episode might have ended there, but the cliffhanger pages take it further. Al confides to Beth that he has a hunch that Sam has leapt beyond his lifetime.

BETH: Into the past or the future?

OBSERVER: (firmly) The future. Don't ask me how I know, I just do. (beat) He's in the future, way in the future...far beyond his lifetime.

BETH: How'd he get there?

OBSERVER: The bartender sent him.

Beth suggests the bartender would know where Sam was, but Al explains he can't get to that bar without

Sam being there.

BETH: You could if you leaped.

OBSERVER: (slowly looking up at her) I might not come back.

BETH: You'll come back. Anyone who came back from Vietnam can come back from anywhere.

OBSERVER: Thirty-five years and you still amaze me.

Al leaps into the bar, his mind swiss-cheesed. Miner Ziggy, Mutta, and Ghee are not surprised at his sudden appearance. After a confusing conversation with them (confusing to Al, that is), Al moves over to the counter and Bartender Al.

BARTENDER: What will it be?

OBSERVER: Information.

The bartender shoves the punchboard at him.

BARTENDER: 25 cents a punch. Hit the jackpot and I'll answer your question.

OBSERVER: I got to gamble to get information from God?

BARTENDER: Who said I was God?

OBSERVER: Sam did. He said you were God or Time or Fate.

BARTENDER: (laughs) Why not an alien while you're at it?

Bartender Al confirms that Sam is indeed in the future, on the job, without Al, because Bartender Al didn't think he was needed.

OBSERVER: (incredulous) You didn't think I was needed! (beat) Who flew the X-2? Me! Who taught him Elvis' moves? Me! Who taught him how to box, shoot pool, draw a six-gun...kiss the girl!

BARTENDER: (amused) You.

OBSERVER: You're damned right, me! (quickly adds) If you're God, excuse the language.

BARTENDER: If I'm God, you're excused.

Half-convincing the Bartender to send him to where Sam is, the man behind the bar tries to warn him.

BARTENDER: You'd be a Leaper, like Sam, with all the inherent risks.

OBSERVER: I still want to join him.

BARTENDER: That's all it takes.

OBSERVER: What do you mean?

BARTENDER: You just have to want to do it.

The bartender steps back for Al to look into the mirror. Al is shocked—everything has changed. Instead of the miners and wooden fixtures, he sees space warriors enjoying a night at a space station bar. And his own reflection shows he's a future version of a blonde bombshell. He spins around to find himself face to face with Ghee, but Ghee is now a uniformed space pilot with a lecherous grin on his face.

GHEE: I've been in a hundred rec bars from here to the Magellian Clouds and believe me, you've got the greatest set of cassabas I've ever targeted.

OBSERVER: Oh, boy.

TO BE CONTINUED

{Or so Don typed at the bottom of the page.}

We asked Harriet if she knew anything about the alternate ending being filmed. She answered that she never saw the alternate ending (the future leap) with the script. She guesses that Don wrote that as a pitch to NBC and/or other networks. Not even the main ending he wrote was completely filmed. She recalls that there was supposed to be a scene involving townspeople, to include a Leaper who had won a contest. But the studio and the network knew the show was about to be canceled and "pulled the plug" on further filming.

Harriet goes on to say that Don does most of his writing at home, and usually brings in a finished ("white") script that's almost ready for shooting. Other writers must do a writer's draft so that Don can see where it's going, but Don doesn't have to submit his scripts to anyone but himself.

Don told Harriet that he got Al and Beth back together for the fans. When Don read her the line about Sam not returning home, she loved it. "And the fans hated it. They thought he was dead. He wasn't dead. I knew what it meant, he's out there still leaping."

*Reprinted, with permission, from *Quantum Quarterly*, Issue 26/27.

OTHER VOICES IN *QUANTUM LEAP* FANDOM

by Karen Funk Blocher and Margaret Colchin

Other Voices in Quantum Leap Fandom is a free listing service printed in *The Observer* and elsewhere, updated according to the most recent information we have. All we need to list your club, zine, etc. is the most current information you can give us about it; stale listings will be dropped if we don't hear for you periodically. For copyright reasons we do not list fiction zines or unlicensed *Quantum Leap* merchandise. Our editorial address (for submissions, updates, and comments) is c/o Project Quantum Leap; 3801 Grindley Park; Dearborn, MI 48124, or e-mail Sharon at SMajorPQL@aol.com. All submissions are welcome, and the editors will choose which submissions are published. Please do NOT use the Michigan address to order a membership.

FAN CLUBS

Project Quantum Leap is the main US-based club for the series, with members literally all over the world. Information and membership form can be found on the back cover of this issue, with even more information at our website: www.projectquantumleap.com

Leapers Unlimited, an international fan club based in Australia, formerly **The Quantum Leap, Scott and Dean Fan Club**, is now handled by Trudy Costagliola and May Ling Ong. The new incarnation will try to publish an 8-10 page newsletter, called *Leapers Gazette*, about every three months. Australian subscriptions are \$16 AD per year, and overseas memberships are \$15 US (US funds only) per year. You can send your subscription application to Trudy at P.O. Box 4025; Castlecrag, 2068; NSW, Australia, or, if you're in the US, you can send a check in US funds to Janey Graves, PO Box 134, Osawatomie, KS 66064. If you're already a member of the previous Club, your membership will be transferred to the new Club, and you'll be sent a renewal notice when your membership expires. For further information, write to Club director Trudy or e-mail her at quantumleap88@hotmail.com

Quantum Quest is a quarterly British newsletter and letterzine. This small format, 32-page newsletter is crammed with photos, art, letters, commentary on the episodes, and news on UK and American developments in the world of *QL*. To join, write to Emma Fee, 75 Friars Ave., Delapre, Northampton NN4 8PX, ENGLAND. UK price £6 for four issues, elsewhere £7 (cheque payable to Ms. Emma Fee) or \$18 in US funds (cheque to Janey Graves, as above).

Publication of *Basically Bakula*, the quarterly zine devoted primarily to Scott Bakula, is managed by Gillian Earthy of the UK. Annual rate is £5 in UK, £6 for Europe, £7 worldwide. Residents of USA can send checks \$15 (US funds) to Janey Graves (address above). For more information you can e-mail Gillian at BB@aeearthly.freereserve.co.uk or write to her at 48 Norwich Road; Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 2BW; ENGLAND

The official French Fan Club is **Les Chroniques Quantum**. They put out a zine of about 60 pages on a regular basis, about every four months. Membership and three issues of the zine are \$29.00/year. For information, write to Christine Didier, 5 rue des Jonquilles, 34170, Castelnau-le-Lez, France. Please enclose two IRCs (international response coupons that you get at the post office) and a self-addressed envelope. Some dedicated Dean fans in the French Club have published a wonderful book, in English, detailing Dean's career. Cost for the book, "Dean Stockwell, from Midshipman Donald Martin to Admiral Al Calavicci", is \$20.00. You can send your order to Marine Vion, 22 rue de Vouille, 75015, Paris, France.

John D'Aquino's Fan Club is managed by Jeanne Koenig as an on-line club. For information, e-mail Jeanne at JKoenig317@aol.com