

'I'm Gonna Need You' ... To Star In **WANTED**

By Iris Wiener
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You may not recognize Gary Cole by name, but you've certainly thought of him when your boss has ruined your weekend by saying to you, "I'm gonna need you to go ahead and come in on Saturday." After perfecting heartless office manager Bill Lumbergh in the cult hit movie *Office Space*, Cole has made a lasting impression on Hollywood ... and not because of his infamous TPS reports. The talented actor is currently leading a different sort of workplace as Lt. Conrad Rose in *WANTED*. Considered the moral center of a specialized team of law enforcement officers working to track down Los Angeles' 100 most wanted criminals, Rose juggles dealing with being a parent during a messy divorce while trying to make the town a safer place.

Cole is no stranger to meaty, conflicted characters, as he has played many throughout a career that spans more than 50 movies, telefilms, and miniseries. Other than his well-known recurring role as Vice President Robert "Bingo Bob" Russell on *The West Wing*, his television work includes the recent ABC Family telefilm *Pop Rocks*, as well as the 2002 remake of the comedy series *Family Affair*. His breakthrough role came in the 1984 NBC miniseries *Fatal Vision*, and a few years later he landed his first regular role in *Midnight Caller*. Other highlights include *Son of the Morning Star*, *American Gothic*, *From Earth to the Moon*, and *The Family Guy*.

On the big screen, Cole's dead-on impersonation of Mike Brady helped make *The Brady Bunch* and *A Very Brady Sequel* box-office hits. His other recent film credits include *The Ring 2*, *Mozart and the Whale*, *Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story*, *Win a Date with Tad Hamilton*, *A Simple Plan*, *The Gift*, and *Cry Wolf*.

Cole recently gave *The Long-Islander* a call to discuss what it's like to get inside the mind of a cop.

What about *WANTED* specifically makes it different from all other cop dramas? If someone said to you, "It's just another cop show, why should I watch it?" what would you tell him or her?

I would tell them my mantra: I can't tell somebody why to watch something. My thing is if you decide to tune into the show and you're compelled not to turn it off, then that's the reason you should watch it- because you're compelled for some reason to keep watching it. I'm not the audience, I'm not going to tell anybody the reasons why they should watch it before it even appears in front of their face. I've had the same experience when I've done theatre. People begin to ask you about the meaning of the play. My thing is, I'm in the play. That's over for me. The meaning of the play is up to you now because in a way you got a better view

of the play than I did. You're observing me, I'm not observing you. That's where I'm coming from.

Well then how would you say that this show is different from a rerun of *NYPD Blue*? How is *WANTED* fresh?

I can't put into words what's going to compel somebody. I think it's more of a throwback. Even *NYPD Blue* preceded a lot of stuff that's now delving into science and procedure, but *NYPD Blue* was more character, and I would say that *WANTED* is more similar to that.

How did you prepare yourself mentally and physically to play the role of a cop?

We had some tech guys with us that come by whenever we're doing something procedural so that they can relay to us whatever needs to be done. They make it so that we're looking like we're knowing what we're doing. We did some weapons training in the range, handled different firearms and pistols and rifles and some automatic stuff. I took a ride on rounds with the police department just to get a look from that seat. And maybe most importantly, listening to these guys and asking them questions about what they do and what they've seen, and just hearing stories about their experiences.

Is it harder to prepare for the role of a cop, or that of a divorced dad that's struggling with his family?

I don't know anything about divorce, fortunately, but I do know about marriage. I've been happily married since 1992. This is not to say that we haven't butted heads once in a while. Anybody who has been married for some period of time knows what conflict is. That's more of a human thing to pay attention to. You try to look at what's inside of a scene and try to glom onto something that you can relate to in your own life.

What is your earliest memory of yourself as a performer?

I got into performing in high school. My early memories are on that stage. I went to high school in the mid-seventies, so basically I did all the mid-60s musicals ... *How To Succeed in Business...*, *Camelot*, *Don't Drink the Water*, etc.

What did you want to be when you grew up? Were you destined to be an actor from day one?

No, initially I think I wanted to be the stereotypical fire-

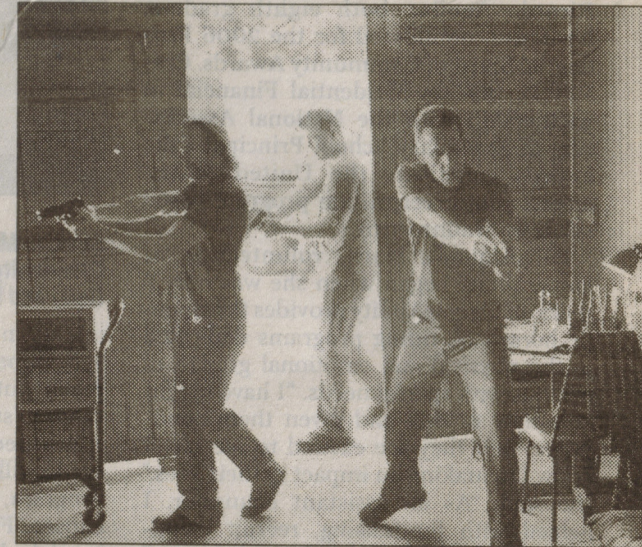


Photo Courtesy Patrick Ecclesine

Gary Cole, who earned fame through *Office Space*, will now star in *WANTED*, a new cop drama which will premiere on TNT on December 5.

man / policeman, but that's only because I saw pictures of them and thought they looked cool in the uniform.

So, what are those freakin' TPS reports anyway?

I have no idea. I don't even know what TPS stand for. It probably doesn't even stand for anything.

How has Bill Lumbergh changed your life? Aside from *The West Wing*, *Office Space* is the movie from where most would probably recognize you.

It's kind of been a radar thing for me. Any room that I've walked into for an audition- that's a known thing. They know the character of Lumbergh. Whether that's good or bad, depending on that audition or meeting it's hard to know, but it's certainly something that at least landed, and made an impact.

Tell Long Islanders why you enjoy *WANTED* so much.

If you tune in and give it a chance, I think we'll give you reason to stay there.

WANTED, which premiered in July, returns to TNT on Monday, December 5 with two new back-to-back episodes at 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. Three additional episodes will air December 12, 17, and 26 at 10 p.m.