

TELEVISION

The Many Faces of Actor Scott Grimes

By Iris Wiener

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Scott Grimes epitomizes the actor whom everyone knows but cannot name. Whether he's recognized as "Scott Wolf's friend" on *Party of Five*, Sgt. Donald Malarkey in the HBO mini-series *Band of Brothers*, or Dr. Morris, the irritating new redheaded chief resident on *ER*, the Massachusetts native has clearly left an impression on his television audiences. He continues to do so as the voice of Steve Smith, the 13-year-old son of CIA agent Stan Smith, on FOX's *American Dad*. Grimes' vocal talents can also be found on his second and newest album, *Livin' on the Run*.

A cross between rock, hip hop and pop, *Livin' on the Run* showcases Grimes' passion for the craft of great singers/songwriters. His first CD was released in 1989, but he caught the acting bug and landed multiple television and film roles, including those on *Party of Five*, *Who's the Boss?*, *Crimson Tide*, and *Mystery, Alaska*. "Sunset Blvd.," the first single off of *Livin' on the Run*, has already garnered radio play nationwide. Grimes recently spoke with the Long-Islander Newspapers about his many faces in the entertainment business.

You have one of those faces that everyone seems to know. How often do you get the dreaded "Hey, it's that guy!" or, "I know you, you're that guy on TV!?"

I love when people recognize me! I'm such a people person. There's lots of people that watch *ER* and know exactly who I am, but what happens with me a lot is people think we went to high school together! I get that so much! People are like, "Hey, how you doin' bro? Where'd you go to high school?" I'm not the kind of person to ever say, "No dude, I'm on television," just because it sounds so lame to say something like that. So I'll sit there and debate with them in a nice way about what I did and didn't do growing up, and just sit there in a kind of long conversation. I don't mind it, but sometimes I'm in a rush and I still won't say, "Oh you know me from television."

Rumor has it that you taught yourself how to play guitar?

I took piano lessons for so many years, and I kind of understood that instrument. I never really understood the



Photo Courtesy Velocity Entertainment

Scott Grimes has quickly made a name for himself on TV and on the big screen, from parts in projects as diverse as *ER*, *Band of Brothers*, *Mystery, Alaska*, and as the voice of Steve Smith on FOX's *American Dad*.

It depends on the song. I definitely like writing the music and melody more than I like the lyrics. The lyrics take me a bit more time just because I would never consider myself a poet, and a lot of great writers obviously have this poetic side to them. I'm very literal. I write about what I see, and sometimes that takes a little longer than throwing in a thousand metaphors. It's just about what inspires me at the time.

Pick your top two songs from *Livin' on the Run* and tell me why they're the most meaningful to you.

"Livin' on the Run" is my number one. It encapsulates the entire record for me. If you had to play a person one song that would just give them the smell and the feel of the record, it's that song. A lot of songs on my record are homages to other performers ... literally. I don't hide from it. "Livin' on the Run" was named for Bruce Springsteen's "Born to Run" because it's one of my favorite songs. I wrote

tors, because they have to be the rocks of that show.

Is Dr. Morris the funniest character on television or what?

What's great about him is that people are so used to laughing when I come on screen, that I hardly have to do anything anymore. I just say the lines and stand there, and people are naturally going to laugh because of my history. I love it! I wouldn't want it any other way.

Tell me what it's like to do the voice of Steve Smith on *American Dad*.

Steve couldn't be more of an opposite from his dad. His dad is just like Mr. Incredible, just this macho guy, gun-toting CIA agent. Steve is this geek who just wants to see boobies! (*Laughs*) He just doesn't have the social skills of his friends. It's one of the funniest freakin' shows I've ever seen. I'm a huge *Family Guy* fan, and for many years I've been friends with Seth McFarlane, who created it, and he asked me if I'd audition for it, and I said "Sure!" I love it because I can just pop on a baseball cap, go into the studio, the lines are right in front of me, I get to work with the character ... it's a blast!

You have a 4-year-old son and 6-year-old daughter. Were they lucky enough to get your signature red hair?

No, they don't look anything like me! They're both dirty blondes. They're lucky, trust me. Back when I was growing up, people made fun of redheads. Man, I wouldn't wish that on anybody, some of the things those kids did and said to me ...

Do you have any plans to stop on Long Island during a *Livin' on the Run* tour?

We'll definitely come to New York, we miss it there so much. Funny story: For a while I lived in Queens, but I grew up telling people that I lived on Long Island. When I lived in Queens everyone I knew was rich, living on Broadway or whatever. I would have to say I lived on Long Island because it sounded better than Queens. It was so funny. As the years went by and I didn't do it anymore, I would still

have someone teach me. So I just picked up the guitar and said, "I'm gonna learn by myself." I learned three chords at first, and then kind of strolled up to my guitar player. I would play with him, and ask him for a new chord, and he didn't know that I was really learning. It was just because I'm impatient, plain and simple.

That must have been really difficult!

It was, because at the same time I was telling people that I'm an okay guitar player. So I had to really fake it and try to find the little shortcuts to fake guitar playing. So yeah, it was really annoying, but now I'm pretty okay.

You wrote all of the songs on *Livin' on the Run*. Which aspect of the development of the album was the most challenging for you?

funkei. My second would have to be "Summerthing." I wrote it in Virginia Beach about Virginia Beach. It's just simple, and I like the title. I love summer songs!

***ER* is one of the most successful shows on television, and you've joined the cast so late in its run. Do you feel any pressure to keep the show at a certain level of achievement in the coming season?**

Of course there's going to be pressure for us because Noah Wyle is gone. But I think they've done a really good job of welcoming the new cast. They've really opened it up and blended the new and old cast into one another so that it's not a harsh change. But there's always pressure too. The great thing about Dr. Morris is that he's lazy, and I have so much more room to be disliked because I'm so inept. The pressure really falls more on the other new doc-

I didn't, I lived in Queens." And now, all of my friends out here in California are from Smithtown!

Why will our readers enjoy *Livin' on the Run*?

I don't want people to lump it in with any kind of music. You can actually listen to heavy metal and punk, and also listen to this. This is a classic rock album. I don't mean that this album is classic, I just mean that I wrote this because I was a big fan of a genre of music that everyone is still a fan of. I want them to just enjoy it with all the other music they enjoy, because they don't have to change what they listen to because they listen to Scott Grimes. It all goes together like meat and potatoes ... or Queens and Long Island!

Visit Scott Grimes at his Web site, www.scottgrimes.com.