



TELEVISION

Dylan McDermott Returns To TV In “Dark Blue”

By: *Emily Hochberg* on July 14, 2009 in *Interviews, TV News*



Dylan McDermott. (TNT)

Dylan McDermott is back. But you may not recognize him. Don't panic; he's still as handsome as ever, but when McDermott returns to TV tonight he won't be anything like his famous alter ego, Bobby Donnell, on **The Practice**. And that's exactly what he wants. Sure, it sounds like the typical actor move to remind us that they're anything but the character we loved them for (David Caruso,

anyone?), but that's hardly the case here. When McDermott returns as Carter Shaw on TNT's **Dark Blue**, a dark and twisty undercover cop in the seedy underbelly of LA, he isn't hoping you'll forget about Bobby Donnell completely, only that you'll cheer for Carter too.

"I think that people are hopefully ready to see me in a different light and enough time has passed where this is a radically different character from that character," he said in a press call with Fancast. "So I hope that audiences will accept me in this role."

This is his second attempt at TV post-Practice (he starred on the short lived drama "**Big Shots**," and it's the lead in Jerry Bruckheimer's first foray into cable which premieres on TNT, July 15. And with TV hits like Cold Case, Without a Trace, and the CSI series under his belt, Bruckheimer and McDermott are both hoping for the same level of success off the networks.

"I think for an actor nowadays this is where you want to be. It feels like network television is struggling to find its identity, and that's why you see so many actors flocking to cable because, number one, you get to have character. And that's something that you can't really have on network television anymore, it's more about story, and in movies it's more about special effects. Character is the bread and butter of cable, and you get to have a story, but most importantly actors get something to munch on," McDermott said.

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Surely it also helps to have Mr. Jerry Bruckheimer backing your show. "Most of his shows are on network so this is his first TNT show and his first cable show [and] I can definitely feel the difference," McDermott said of Bruckheimer. "I think that with Jerry, you know things miraculously get done that maybe wouldn't have gotten done with someone else. It's no mystery why he's as successful as he is because he surrounds himself with the very best people."

In the case of Dark Blue, those "very best people" also include Omari Hardwick (TNT's Saved), Logan Marshall Green (The O.C.), and Nicki Aycox (Supernatural), who are cast alongside McDermott as his crack undercover team. And like any other good law enforcement team out there on TV, they'll come ripe with their own emotional baggage too.

Hardwick plays Ty Curtis, a recently married cop juggling his real life relationships with those he's developed while undercover. Marshall Green is Dean Bendis, a cop who has immersed himself so deeply in this other world that his colleagues are left to wonder whether he's perhaps gone over to the other side. And then there's Aycox's Jaimie Allen, a newbie brought in for her excellent skill in lying, thanks in part to her own seedy past.

And then of course there's McDermott at the helm as Carter Shaw. He pursues LA's worst criminals, and sacrifices any semblance of a personal life to do so. "He's obviously a person who has enormous demons and is struggling on many different levels, but at the same time he's a

tremendous cop. He gets the job done, he does stuff that nobody else will, and that to me was probably the most intriguing part," McDermott said. "There's certainly something with his wife that's not right, whether she's dead or the relationship didn't work out, we don't quite know. But there's a lot of mystery in terms of what's happened to him, and I'm sure that being a police officer for many years in Los Angeles you get corrupted certainly doing undercover work. So that's taken a huge toll and he's had to sacrifice a big portion of himself in order to do this kind of work. By the time we meet up with him in the pilot everything has caught up to him in his life and the only thing that makes sense to him really is police work."

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Though there will be *some* romance too, McDermott promises, but it probably won't be as fulfilling as we all like. "I think that there's one script coming up where I get involved with a woman but I'm undercover. And a lot of times when you're undercover you're a different person so it's kind of fun to be a different person within a different person," he teases. "And he catches himself because he's sort of gregarious as this character and a little bit over the top, and then he gets involved with this woman, and we realize, oh my God, that's not even him. So he has to end it because he's not that person. I think that he's got a lot of work to do before he can be in a relationship, but I think that women will definitely come and go in his life. But in terms of staying, that's probably a bigger question."

So what kind of prep work could he do on a profession most people can't talk about? "Meeting undercover cops, I was initially struck by what they weren't telling me, and I was fascinated by that fact of how much they were hiding from me and how much Carter Shaw hides from others in his life. [Carter] is a guy who is haunted. He is so conflicted and that's a great thing to play over time."

The undercover premise also means it's not your typical cop procedural. "There hasn't been a successful undercover show in quite a while and I just thought it was a perfect time," McDermott said. "And certainly with the combination of TNT and Jerry Bruckheimer and the script from Danny Cannon and Doug Jung, I thought that this was a perfect opportunity for me to maybe do something a little different than people were kind of used to me seeing me as Bobby Donnell or some guy in a suit and I thought this was a great opportunity."

So, the only question remaining is, are we ready for McDermott to make his return to TV as someone other than Bobby Donnell? Guess we'll have to wait and see before rendering that verdict. Dark Blue premieres Wednesday night at 10 pm, on TNT.