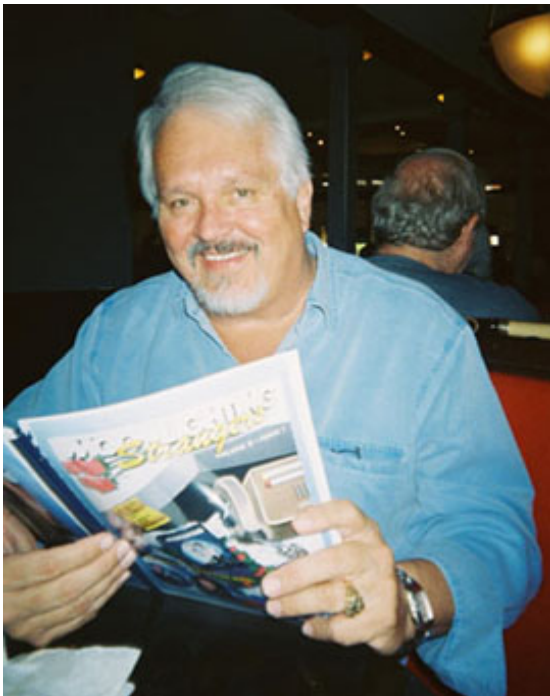


Our EXCLUSIVE Interview with Jay Daniel

By Diana Maiocco



I met with Jay for a nice chat over lunch shortly before the Season 3 DVD set was released. He was more than happy to share his memories about the challenges of producing such a monumental show as *Moonlighting*. He also talked about recording DVD commentary with Bruce, Cybill, and Glenn on *Atomic Shakespeare* and how he ended up doing *Big Man on Mulberry Street* on his own. We think he did a great job!

DM: Before *Moonlighting*, you worked with Glenn on another project called *Concrete*

Beat. Can you tell me how you met?

JD: I had done a movie of the week called *In The Glitter Palace* with a director named Bob Butler, who is one of the best directors in the history of television, as far as I'm concerned. Bob later became a co-creator of *Remington Steele*, which was a boy/girl detective show, with Pierce Brosnan and Stephanie Zimbalist. Glenn was a writer/producer on that show. Anyway, I'm sure that Glenn, who'd always wanted to work with Bob, spoke to him about directing this pilot that he'd written, and Bob mentioned my name as a possible candidate to produce it.

I met with Glenn at the *Remington Steele* offices in late 1982. God, that's almost a quarter of a century ago, isn't it? Yikes! Anyway, I think it was in November, or so. I'd done a series called *Eischied* with Joe Don Baker, which was set in New York. *Eischied* was the chief of detectives in New York City, and we had shot most of that show in LA. We only shot second units and a few scenes back in

New York. That's exactly how Glenn was planning on approaching *Concrete Beat*, because his budget would only allow him to shoot a few days in New York. So I was a good candidate for that job because of my experience on *Eischied*. He gave me the script to take home. I read it immediately, called him up that afternoon and said, "Glenn, whether I do this or not, I just want you to know that this is just about the best pilot I've ever read." I really meant that sincerely. It was a wonderful script. So he hired me. I think because I flattered him (laughing), I don't know for sure.

We shot that pilot in February of 1983. It was well received by the network and all that, and they picked up scripts for the series which Glenn actually started to write. I was out scouting for a warehouse for us to build sets in when I got the call that ABC did not pick up the show. *Concrete Beat* was about a newspaper columnist. An actor named John Getz played the lead and was quite terrific in it. I was very proud of the pilot, and Bob Butler, of course, directed it beautifully, but it didn't get on the air. So Glenn and I, reluctantly, parted ways. I had a production company of my own at the time and so I went off and shot an After-School Special for CBS that won an Emmy, by the way, thank you very much (*Dead Wrong: The John Evans Story*).

I was in the middle of developing a pilot for CBS when Glenn called me and said, "ABC wants me to do another pilot, it's called *Long Time Gone*." So I signed on to do that one because I loved working with him and Bob was directing. We shot *Long Time Gone* almost exactly a year from the time we shot *Concrete Beat* It didn't go to series. We found out it was dead in May of '84. My CBS pilot didn't get picked up either. It was a "Who Done It" detective show called *The Adventures of Alexander Hawkins*. It lost out to another "Who Done It" called *Murder, She Wrote*. Go figure.

On June 1st of 1984, I get a call from Glenn saying, "You know, they want me to do this boy/girl detective thing, and they've given me a 'go' on it. Would you like to do it?" I said, "Sure," and that turned out to be *Moonlighting*. June 1st is my birthday--best present I've ever been given. Glenn took two months to write the script and we had a long, long time to cast it. I'm sure you know all those stories. We cast Cybill early on, in July of that year, and we didn't start shooting until October. They picked us up immediately after we delivered the pilot. I became

part of Glenn's company (Picturemaker Productions), and Moonlighting became my life. Long answer to a short question.

DM: In regards to the pilot, did you have any input with Glenn since he wanted you to work on it with him?

JD: Glenn had a real vision of the show from the get-go. I mean, he had it in his head. We looked at old movies together and it was more talking about tone and rhythm than it was talking about what the story was going to be or who the characters were. Because he had, at least it seemed to me, from the very beginning a very, very good take on exactly what he wanted to do. Bob Butler and I were sort of along for the ride there. We would read Glenn's pages as they came in and make a few suggestions. But it was clear Mr. Caron knew what he was doing. I think Glenn had maybe a third of the script done when he and I met with Cybill. It was at a restaurant called Laserre. It's now been remodeled and became Pinot on Ventura Blvd. out here in the Valley. I don't mean to digress about that, but I'll never forget that meeting because Cybill was dressed all in white and Glenn got very tongue tied.

DM: Yes, he told us that (laughing).

JD: It was like "Yamma, yamma, yamma," you know? Anyway, it was a memorable meeting. She signed on before the script was anywhere near completed. It took him a couple of months to write the script. During that time, Bob and I would see pages and we'd meet with Glenn on them. You know, there was always the question mark. I know you've probably heard this story before, but there was a scene in the show where Addison is in his office, and he has a trash can balanced above the door. He's playing basketball, Miss Dipesto walks in, opens the door and the can falls on her head. He walks over to her and says, "Miss Dipesto, you're looking 'pale' today." Bob and I go, "Can we do that? What kind of show is this?" So we were always sort of questioning the tone. How far can we go with the comedy as opposed to the drama, and is there enough jeopardy. Of course, Glenn has this whole theory about not believing jeopardy on television because you know the stars are going to be back next week, so why bother putting them in jeopardy? Those kinds of discussions were always going on. In the end, Bob and I both trusted Glenn's vision. I'm glad we did.

DM: The pilot was darker than the rest of the series, but that was the starting point and it evolved. Did you and Glenn discuss the episodes' progression?

JD: No, I don't recall ever having those kinds of discussions specifically. I think it's just as you said, using your word, it did evolve. It just sort of became what it was. If you look at the pilot, and you put it up against some of the later episodes... I mean, we thought the pilot was zipping by. We thought, "Man, this is fast!" We looked at *His Girl Friday* and other classic films like that to try and get the energy and pace that those old movies had into our pilot. You put the pilot up against some of the later episodes and it's slow by comparison. It just sort of happened with Bruce and Cybill getting more and more comfortable with their roles, the back and forth banter and all of that. Along with Glenn finding that special rhythm of his as a writer, the show just got more energetic and funnier. The emphasis became much less on the plots of the various episodes and much more on the chemistry between David and Maddie. I don't know if that change was a conscious thing on Glenn's part or if it just sort of happened. I think a lot of the success of *Moonlighting*, when you look back on it, came out of spontaneity. At the time it was chaos, you know, the script wasn't ready, Glenn had to go write something now or we'd have to shut down. His back was to the wall and he'd go in the room and write this thing and you'd look at it and go, "Ok, let's shoot it," and then it was done. It was written the day before, sometimes the morning of, and done by the end of the day. And you know what? It was pretty damn good. Sometimes it was great.

DM: You mentioned spontaneity. That's interesting because I thought, and a lot of people thought so too, that some of the lines were improvised. But they weren't.

JD: Well, I would say more gratified than surprised. The show was picked up and six weeks later we were shooting. So during those first five episodes we were really up against the wall making them and getting them on the air. On Episode 4 (*Next Stop Murder*), for example, we were shooting a very complicated scene with David and Maddie on top of a train. It was all rear projection on stage. The



next day, we found out something was wrong with the camera, and everything we'd shot on the train was no good. So we ended up having to come back over the weekend to do all these tests to figure out what had happened. On the following Monday, we re-shot those scenes, and the episode was on air the next day. On the fifth and last episode of that first season, I think we had four days between the day we wrapped and the day it was on the air. It was that kind of pressure all the time. So you have these blinders on. You're not really paying much attention to the fact that the numbers are ok or they're not ok. At least I wasn't. I know, of course, that the numbers were not great for those first few episodes, and by the way, we were supposed to shoot six episodes. We only shot five because we ran out of time. But the network insisted that we put the fifth and last episode on when they wanted it on, and that episode got a little up-tick in the ratings. I don't remember what the numbers were, but it was enough of a bump that it got the network's attention. We were nip and tuck with another show; it was a cop show. That last episode getting on the air, and getting better numbers is one of the reasons they chose us over that other show, something called *MacGruder and Loud*. I think, I could be wrong.

DM: I do remember that show. It was a cop show that also starred John Getz.

JD: Yeah. I think that's right. That's what it was. It was sort of ironic because John had starred in *Concrete Beat* for us. We were like, "It's going to be us or them." It ended up being us. *Moonlighting* really became a hit over the summer when they did the reruns. I'm telling you stuff you already know, obviously.

DM: It was word of mouth and the critics started writing about the show. Then when ABC re-ran the episodes in the summer, it led right into the second season.

JD: You know, the critic for the *LA Times*, Howard Rosenberg, panned the show when it came out, and then a few weeks later wrote a retraction saying, "I screwed up. I didn't get it." It was a very unusual thing for a critic to do, but I think that was actually sort of the audience's reaction as well. It was like, "What is this show anyway?" Then they slowly got it. Then they started telling their friends and saying "Did you see that thing the other night?" So anyway, when you say surprised, I can't say that I was because I wasn't really focused on that at the time. I was very, very gratified when those numbers started coming in over the

summer obviously, and then when we went on the air the next season, we were a hit right out of the box so that was a great feeling.

DM: It was great to see the second season opener and how the show was already having fun. It was the opening with Bruce and Cybill explaining why they were a minute short and they had to fill in the time. It was for *Brother, Can You Spare a Blonde?*

JD: (laughs) Yeah, right. Oh, you're good!

DM: Can you describe your producing responsibilities during the production of *Moonlighting* because you were also called the line producer.



JD: The line producer is responsible for all the physical aspects of the show. I mean, I dictated what the shooting schedule was going to be, which locations or stage sets were going to be shot when, etc., etc. I hired the crew and made sure they had the equipment they needed and the locations and sets they needed, and that it was all there on time. You know, all of those sort of mundane things like, "How many hair dressers do we need tomorrow?" and what not. Those were some of my responsibilities. I'd come from being a

production manager and an assistant director. I had worked my way up that way, so I had all those sort of tools at my disposal, thank goodness, but I'd also had my own production company, and done a number of projects as a "creative" producer. So I assumed responsibility in those areas as well -- casting, editing, all of it. I was involved in every aspect of the show with the exception of sitting down and writing a script.

The scripts were coming down so late that figuring out how to schedule a show when very often all I'd have was an outline of what the show was going to be, and maybe the first few pages of the episode, was a very "creative" process as well. Remember now, these were the days before you had faxes, cell phones, and

all that. I can remember standing next to a script supervisor in downtown Los Angeles, and she's on a payphone writing down dialogue in long hand. Glenn is dictating it to her over the phone. So it was, as I say, very often a creative challenge just to get an episode shot and "in the can." I was as involved as I could possibly be in the editing process. I love the editing room. We had wonderful editors. Artie Mandelberg oversaw that aspect of it. His brother Neil was an editor and won a couple of Emmys for the show. I'd like to think I made an important contribution in that area as well.

DM: Now, in Season 3 you directed two episodes. *Straight Poop* and *Blonde on Blonde*.

JD: Right.

DM: Anything you can share about those two episodes?

JD: I'm very proud of *Blonde on Blonde*. Well, let me see, as far as *Straight Poop* is concerned, it's a very personal thing for me. When I was out here going to graduate school at UCLA in the mid-60's, I was a theater arts major, and I was thinking seriously of being an actor. I eventually got interested in the other aspects of the business, and ended up on the other side of the camera, thank God. But at the time, I had been an award-winning actor in college. So I got an agent and ended up doing a small, small role in a movie called *Targets* that was the first film that Peter Bogdanovich ever directed. On *Straight Poop* one of the people we interviewed was Peter, and he graciously remembered that I had done that little role for him on *Targets*. Glenn and I went to his house and shot a mock interview in his office. It was really nice that a famous director that I had worked with so many years ago remembered my name, and actually what role I'd played! So that was fun and working with Rona Barrett was a kick. One of my favorite moments in this episode was when Cybill comes out of her office holding a scrim in front of her face. It was sort of a joke on Gerry Finnerman, our cinematographer and his approach to photographing her in sort of an old fashioned way.

DM: Diffusion.

JD: Yeah. A lot of diffusion. In some of those early episodes, *Cybill*'s close-ups looked like they were from an old Doris Day movie. Gerry was experimenting with different kinds of diffusion, trying to make her look as beautiful as possible. Maybe he went a step too far a time or two, but he was a truly great cinematographer and we were lucky to have him on the show. As far as *Blonde on Blonde* goes, I just remember the exhilaration of actually finally being able to take the reins and do it myself. One of my responsibilities as a producer on the show was to make certain that the director du jour, who's never done an episode of *Moonlighting* before, and maybe seen only one or two of them -- does the same show that we've been doing. So you sort of have to, and I mean this in the kindest way, you sort of have to lead them around by the hand and make certain that they understand that we don't do it that way, we do it this way. Don't get me wrong, we had some great directors do the show who caught on very quickly and didn't need my help at all. Peter Werner, Will Mackenzie, Allan Arkush, just to name a few. But, anytime somebody new came in, I had to walk them through how we wanted the show to be shot. It was more than a little frustrating to not be able to go in there and just do it myself. So it was great for me to finally be the one to say "Action." I was thrilled to do it.

DM: Did you always want to direct?

JD: I had directed a number of things in the past here and there. By the time *Blonde on Blonde* came along, I'd directed a lot of scenes on the show. We'd go do a second unit, a B unit we'd call it, but we'd go shoot scenes from an episode while the first unit was shooting something else to try and make our schedule. Anytime there was a re-shoot of something and the director wasn't available, I'd be the one directing it. It was really nice to finally direct an entire episode. I love to direct but the one thing I wouldn't ever want to do is direct something that I wasn't producing because you really are sort of a guest host, you know? There's gonna be somebody else with a producer credit leading you around the stage saying, "No, do it this way, do it that way," just like I did. As long as I was in charge, I was fine. It would be very difficult for me to be the director du jour on somebody else's show. In television, the producer gets the final cut you know -- that would make me crazy. There are some isolated scenes that I remember directing more than doing *Straight Poop* or *Blonde on Blonde*. I directed some scenes on *Blast From The Past*, the Dana Delany episode.

DM: Yes, yes. *Knowing Her*. There was a title change.

JD: Yes, you're right. It was ultimately called *Knowing Her*. Oh, you're good. Anyway, I directed the scene in the park. She drives up in a car. They dance in front of the headlights while *This Old Heart of Mine* plays on the soundtrack. I remember vividly directing that scene. I just love Dana Delany. In the same episode, it was on the balcony where she almost falls to her death. I remember directing that scene. Those images stick in my head, more than anything I got "directed by" credit for. I think it's because they were such well-written, well-acted scenes. It was a gift to work with such talented actors.

DM: I know Peter Werner was credited for directing that episode so you directed portions of it?



JD: Well, it's a little complicated.

Another director, who shall go nameless, started the episode and filmed for six days. We had to fire him. He was just too inexperienced and in way over his head. Peter took over the episode and finished it. Along the way he re-shot a number of things the original director had done badly. I directed the night scene in the park with a B unit while the original director was filming during the day because the A unit couldn't film all night long and then get back on a normal daytime schedule. I re-shot the hotel room sequence only after we'd tried to fix the original director's version in the editing room. We finally gave up and I re-shot it because by then, Peter had finished and was off directing something else. Anyway, Bruce was great in those scenes and Dana was such a pleasure to work with. I bumped into her at an award show years later and she talked fondly about that episode.

DM: It kind of put her on the map because back then she played Tom Selleck's girlfriend on *Magnum PI*. But, I remember after seeing her on *Moonlighting*, she got her own series with *China Beach*.

JD: Yeah. I actually still think that's true because the writer/creator of *China Beach*, John Sacret Young, has mentioned her performance in that episode to me as well. So those scenes stand out, and so does the opening sequence of *Atomic*

Shakespeare. It's a big crane shot with a lot of extras on the back lot of Universal. Curtis discovers Allyce in the window. I have vivid memories of directing that scene because it was like doing a little feature. It was a real challenge to pull off on an episode of a TV series. That was one of the times we had to do two units simultaneously to get an episode on the air.

DM: Did you get involved in pitching any ideas for the scripts, or was that totally Glenn's area?

JD: Mostly Glenn. I mean every now and then you'd suggest something, but when you talk about the writing on *Moonlighting*, you can't separate the name Glenn Caron from any of it. I wouldn't say all of the stories were his notion completely because there were some very, very good writers on the show: Roger Director, Chic Eglee, just to name a couple of A+ guys. But everything went through Glenn's computer.

DM: I think it was a typewriter back then.

JD: It was I guess, yeah. You're right again. The one exception was probably *Atomic Shakespeare* where he didn't really do much. Ron (Osborn) and Jeff (Reno) really had a fix on that. The script they turned in was wonderful. I think Glenn may have done some rewrites on the very ending of the show, or at least, suggested rewrites. He'll tell you to this day that, that was 99% their script.

DM: What was it like working with Glenn on a day to day basis?

JD: You know, I love Glenn Caron. There's nothing bad I can say about the man. Even in the heat of battle when his back was against the wall, he kept a sense of humor about it, very self-denigrating humor. Oh, he had his moments, but for the most part he was a great, great pleasure to work with. The one criticism would be that he really did need to have to have his back to the wall and guns pointed at his head to get a script out. But that was because he'd set the bar so very high on *Moonlighting*. You get nominated for sixteen Emmys, you know the bar gets higher. He was a real perfectionist in terms of wanting the scripts to be as good as they could possibly be. He would go to the very last possible second to make a script better. Bruce and Cybill would get ten pages of dialogue they'd

never seen first thing in the morning and they were going to shoot it in another hour or so. It was very difficult for them. Some of the tension on the set was because of that. But other than the lateness of the scripts, I have no criticism of Glenn whatsoever. He's very, very talented, not just as a writer, but he's a great producer and a talented director as well.

I produced *Clean and Sober* for him. It was his directing debut -- a feature film with Michael Keaton for Warner Brothers. I think he did an amazing job on that picture. As far as *Moonlighting* is concerned, I was always amazed at the quality of work he turned out as a writer, considering the kind of duress and pressure he was under. Because the voice of the show was so much his voice. It wasn't something he could just pass on to another writer and not have it go through his typewriter. So you waited on that. I honestly think that a great part of the success of the show can be attributed to getting scripts at the last second because you didn't have a chance to nitpick it to death. You didn't have a chance to second guess it. You just had to go figure out how to shoot it and go shoot it, and then deal with the next problem the next day. Glenn had his little tricks. I'd come in and we'd have no pages for that day, except he would have written a scene starting outside of an elevator:

Elevator door opens, revealing feet. Maddie's feet walk down the hall way. Maddie stops in front of the door, key in the lock, opens the door. We're in the Blue Moon Detective Agency. She walks through the reception area and into her office. She goes to her desk, sits at her desk and opens her brief case.

Well, that takes about an hour and a half to shoot. It took him five minutes to write it and that gave him time to write the actual scene that was going to be shot later in the day. Those feet sort of became a signature of the show. I joked with him about it, "Glenn, you know what you're doing. I know what you're doing."

DM: You're buying time!

JD: "Yeah, you want us to shoot so we're shooting, but are there words coming here?" (Laughs) He'd come in at five o'clock in the morning and start writing, and his writing style is he starts in the beginning and goes through and rewrites. Sometimes he'd even rewrite scenes that we'd already shot just because that's how

he got himself into the story. Whatever that process was that helped him create what he created, I'm all for it.

DM: Some people work really well under pressure and that's his style.

JD: Yeah, I think maybe so and he helped me learn how to work under pressure too. Yes he did.

DM: How about working with Bruce and Cybill? What was your relationship with them like?

JD: Well, I was the guy that more often than not would be the one that would go into the lions den when they were having disagreements. I'd sort of be the referee, try to resolve it so that we could get back to work. So there was that side of it. Everybody knows there was friction between the two of them on the stage. In the beginning, Bruce was just a guy's guy. Let's just say he evolved. Over the years, he went from being the crew's best friend and just being grateful for the work and all of that to realizing that he was going to be a movie star and wanting to move on. Part of that was because of his strained relationship with Cybill. That sometimes made the set a very unpleasant place to be.

Cybill -- I got along with her very well at times, other times I'd have to be the one who said you have to come out of the trailer and go to work. In fairness to her, she was in the makeup chair at six thirty in the morning with pages of dialogue she hadn't seen before, she'd work very long hours, and then be back in the makeup chair at six thirty the next morning. It was debilitating. She wasn't twenty years old anymore and she had concerns about how she looked at the end of the day -- and rightfully so, so we'd do our best to accommodate that. Try to shoot her out of scenes. That made Bruce work later. So there was some resentment about that. It was a constant give and take with both of them, but it's the results that count and in the end, they both gave some incredible performances in spite of what went on off-camera.

I created another show for Cybill down the road so there were obviously times in our relationship where we got along, respected each other, or I don't think she would have done another show with me. That was a series for CBS called *Cybill*

that Chuck Lorre wrote. I was able to convince her to come back to television, even after what she'd been through on *Moonlighting*.



DM: How about working with Allyce and Curtis?

JD: Two wonderful people, two professionals, it was a great pleasure to work with both of them. Allyce got pregnant. I think she was gone from the show for two weeks after she had the baby, and then she was back on the stage ready and willing to work. She was a real pro.

Curtis is a very talented actor. I described that scene that I directed in the Shakespeare show. Well, when you watch that scene, you see that he was like a trained Shakespearian actor. He really understood the language, the movement, and all of that. None of that's directing, that's all Curtis Armstrong. He's just a very talented actor and I hope he has great success in the future. I hope they both do, I think they both have the goods to be wonderful character actors down the road.

DM: When Glenn left the series, how did your role change?

JD: It just got harder. You know, when we lost Glenn, we lost the heart of the show. We had wonderful writers that came in, Chic Eglee and Roger Director, both immensely talented guys. But the show was so much Glenn's vision and so much Glenn's voice it would have been almost impossible for somebody to duplicate all that because, as I say, everything had gone through his typewriter, and then suddenly it didn't. As good as those guys were, as nicely as some of the episodes turned out, there was sort of a cloud over the show from the time he left that you could never get out from under. It was a shame it had to happen that way.

We'd already reached a critical time at the end of Season 3, when Glenn was still on board. Bruce broke his collar bone. It seems like a minor thing, but it really wasn't. Cybill announced her pregnancy and then morning sickness and all of that stuff started to come into play. It became almost impossible to get a show in the

can. I remember one Mark Harmon episode where we were in an underground garage (*I Am Curious... Maddie*). I've talked about this before -- it was the three of them -- Bruce, Cybill and Mark, in an underground garage, and we shot that sequence, which is a fairly lengthy sequence with a fight between Mark and Bruce. Never once were all three of those actors there together, never once. It was all doubles, trick shots, and somehow we had to go there three times to shoot one scene. I'm sort of proud that we pulled that off actually, but again my point is that it got to be very difficult in that way.

The following season we had to do episodes where there was no Cybill. She was off having twins. Her scenes were shot early, early on and then you had to integrate them with scenes shot weeks later. You were locked into what those scenes were because of what had already been shot with Cybill. Especially in a show that is so much based on the chemistry between those two people, it was a very difficult thing for anybody to pull off.

DM: It really underscored what a great team they were. I mean, you couldn't have the show with just one of the characters. They had to be together because that was the show. They were more interesting to watch together than apart.

JD: Exactly, exactly. That's why you watched the show. You didn't watch it to see "Who done it." You don't really care "Who done it" as long as they're having fun finding out "Who done it." That was the show. It was about them and their relationship. It got to be more and more about that.

DM: The commentary you, Glenn, Bruce, and Cybill did for *Atomic Shakespeare*. What was that like, the four of you in the room together?

JD: At first it was a little awkward. I hadn't seen Cybill since my last day on the *Cybill* show, and I wasn't even aware that she was going to be there. I thought it was going to be Bruce, Glenn, and I. So I walk in and Cybill's there. It was a little awkward at first. She seemed sincerely happy to see me. We exchanged hugs and kisses and all of that stuff. You



know, there's a lot of water under the bridge since *Moonlighting*. So I'd say there was some nervousness at first, but I think the four of us got more and more comfortable as the evening went on.

The interesting thing was I wasn't really prepared to do *Atomic Shakespeare*. I came there to do *Big Man on Mulberry Street* with Glenn. But Bruce, Cybill, and he had done an interview just prior to that. They were running very late so Glenn insisted that I do *Atomic Shakespeare* with them. I was happy to do it and I got as big a kick out of watching Bruce and Cybill watching themselves onscreen as I got out of watching the episode. Bruce was sort of fixated on how much hair he had back then. The hair on his chest was dark and he's making fun of how gray it is now. Cybill was remembering how heavy the costumes were, what a pain they were to put on, and what not. They both, of course, remembered the long hours on that episode.

The show took ten calendar days to shoot along with me directing five days of B unit at the same time. Will Mackenzie was directing the A unit. I was filming mostly on the back lot of Universal. We were shuttling Cybill and Bruce back and forth from other locations where they were working with Will. It was a very complicated and difficult schedule to say the least. They had vivid memories of that. Bruce would point to the screen and say "That's night for day," meaning we were shooting the scene at night and trying to make it look like day, which was true. Seeing that episode again was really fun for me, especially watching it with Bruce and Cybill. You see the two of them together, even at this age, and you understand why the show was such a success.

DM: During the commentary, did you see some of that chemistry between them?

JD: Oh absolutely I did. I did especially when they would sort of snipe at each other a little. They were just kidding around, you know. It was fun to watch. I'm grateful for the experience. As I said, it was a big surprise for me that Cybill was there, now that I talk about it. I'm glad it happened that way. I ended up doing the *Big Man on Mulberry Street* commentary that I was supposed to do that day a couple of weeks later. I was supposed to do it with Glenn but he couldn't fit it into his schedule so I ended up doing it by myself. I guess it turned out ok. I hope so.

DM: What can you share about the commentary Mark Harmon did for *Sam and Dave*?

JD: Glenn did that one with him. I was supposed to do it and couldn't because I was shooting an episode of *Hot Properties*. I was too busy, but I would have liked to. Mark Harmon is a great guy. He was a real champion on *Moonlighting*. He was a real pro, the best.

DM: Not only has our website successfully campaigned for the DVD release, but we're also campaigning for a *Moonlighting* reunion movie. What are your thoughts about a *Moonlighting* movie starring Bruce and Cybill?

JD: Well, I don't know what it would be. I don't know if we want to see these characters fifty years old. I don't know if I'd be behind that myself. If lightning struck and there was this fantastic idea and it came out of Glenn Caron's mind and I got the call, I'd be there. But I don't know what that would really be. I think so much time has passed- I'm not sure what the demographic make up of the audience would be. It was twenty years ago so the people in the demographic that the studios aim for, were too young to watch the show or they weren't born yet. So I don't know. I certainly wouldn't want it to turn out to be like the *Brady Bunch* movie, or one of those parody things. I think that would be a shame, and I don't think that Glenn would ever do that kind of thing. So I would say that it's highly unlikely that a movie would ever happen.

DM: Well for now, we're happy that they reunited on the DVD. It was something that a lot of people didn't think would happen.

JD: Well, that's true. I hand it to the people who made that happen. I'm sure Glenn was a big part of making that work. It probably took a lot of persuasion on his part, along with the people doing the DVD. But, then again, it was one of those things that almost had to happen eventually.

DM: A lot of fans do want to see them together again. Fans remembered the magic and the chemistry between them.

JD: The two of them, Bruce and Cybill, were finishing an interview along with Glenn when I arrived there. So I overheard some of it. I think that would be a reason for me as a fan of the show to buy the DVD just to see how the two of them act when they're thrown together after all these years. It was fascinating to me to see the two of them together, and watch how they interacted. In some ways it was like it was only yesterday and we were back on Stage 20 again. They would be joking with each other, and it was those same David and Maddie rhythms, you know.

DM: They never lost the rhythm.

JD: I guess not. And then other times it was awkward silences and that sort of thing. That's just normal, I think, anytime you run into someone you haven't seen in a long time.

DM: What are some of your favorite episodes?

JD: Ha! I say *Blonde on Blonde* because it was so well-directed. (Laughs)

DM: That was a great episode. I like to say that episode was the catalyst that got David and Maddie together.

JD: I think you are right. It was a wonderfully written episode. I was very gratified to do it. I go to the usual suspects when I'm asked to pick my favorite episode. I think my all time favorite episode is the black and white show, *The Dream Sequence Always Rings Twice*. That was quite an undertaking. It was such an unusual thing for a television series to do, and then there was Orson Welles, it was such a thrill to meet him and have him appear on our show. That's an experience that I'll never forget. I'll digress for a minute. We filmed Mr. Welles on a borrowed soundstage. It was Glenn, myself and a very, very small crew. He did his dialogue exactly as written, Take one was perfect, and then he wanted to do it a few more times. I was very much in awe, you know? I remember I had been so focused on the man, I mean, here's Orson Welles on this huge empty stage talking to the camera and I was zeroed in on him.

When we finished filming, I turned around and that empty soundstage was now full of people that had silently come in to get a glimpse of him. It killed me. I'll always remember that moment. He posed for pictures with us and then he was gone. You think you're very jaded because you're in the business and you've met everybody. But then here's Orson Welles and you're just a weak-kneed fan, honored to be in his presence. That experience alone makes it one of my favorite episodes.

DM: And that you got to meet him right before he passed away.

JD: Yes, he died exactly one week later. We filmed his scene on October 3rd, 1985 and he passed away on October 10th. The last performance he ever gave helped make the black and white episode even more special. We shot the musical numbers at the Aquarius Theater in Hollywood. It had a large revolving stage and it was fun to figure out how to use it. Cybill was amazing in that episode, I thought.

This is a personal thing, but it was the only time that my mother ever came to the set. She was visiting from Oklahoma and my wife brought her to the theater when Cybill was doing her big musical number. I remember her being there and everybody being so sweet and gracious to her. She passed away a few months later so that's another reason I am very fond of that episode. I think the *Shakespeare* show is the most ambitious show we ever did. I love *My Fair David*. I think that was a great episode. If you go with just *Moonlighting* as *Moonlighting*, it's probably the quintessential *Moonlighting* episode. I actually liked the *Straight Poop* and that has nothing to do with the fact that I got directing credit on it. Honest. I thought for a clip show, which is what it was, it really didn't feel like a clip show. It was somehow much more than that.

DM: You were taking on the tabloids.

JD: Yeah. That helped make it more than just another clip show. Those are the episodes that jump to mind. If I sit here and think about it, I'll think of about a dozen more.

DM: Well, I personally love *Big Man on Mulberry Street* because you have Stanley Donen directing the dance sequence.



JD: How could I forget to mention *Mulberry Street*? I love it too. That's one of the reasons I was so happy to do the commentary on it. There's a six minute dance scene in the middle of an episode of a detective show. Who in the world would want to take something like that on, you know? Bruce Willis had never danced a step

in his life, as far as I know. Cybill sure never claimed to be a dancer, so to take all that on in the middle of an episode of television, and say now we're going to stop and do a six-minute production number, I mean come on. I'm still impressed we pulled that off.

I talk about this in the commentary. We got a little lucky in that we had to shut down after filming the third episode of Season 3 (*Symphony In Knocked Flat*). We'd finished Season 2 very late and ABC wanted us back on the air as soon as possible. So we had a very, very brief time off between Season 2 and Season 3. We started filming episode 1 of Season 3 (*The Son Also Rises*) without having a finished script so by the time we finished episode 3, we needed to take a hiatus to try and get caught up on scripts. So we took a week off. It was during that week that we broke the back of that dance number in rehearsal. We were able to get Bruce and Cybill in during that hiatus week, whereas normally they wouldn't have had the time to do those intensive rehearsals. We did more rehearsals as we went on, but that week off broke its back. I think without that hiatus we would have been in trouble. We might not have been able to pull it off. I'm especially proud of the dance sequence obviously, but even without it, that was a very good episode of television. There were some wonderful scenes between Bruce and Cybill.

DM: Very dramatic.

JD: And of course, it was revealed in that show that David had caught his wife with another woman, which was for that time in television, a very bold thing to

do. Yes, I would definitely have to point to *Mulberry Street* as one of the best episodes we ever shot.

DM: After *Moonlighting*, you were the Executive Producer of *Roseanne* and *Cybill*, to name just a couple. You just wrapped up a series called *Hot Properties*. You seem to take on projects with strong female characters. Is that intentional?

JD: (Laughs) I don't really think it is. *Roseanne* is an example. ABC brought me on that show. I had never done a four camera show. *Roseanne* was a four camera tape show. I had only done single camera film shows, hour long shows. So they brought me on primarily because they were having problems with *Roseanne*. She had walked off the set. She was having problems with the writers, and they thought of me because I had somehow kept *Moonlighting* going in spite of all the tumult, especially the problems between Bruce and Cybill. It was well known that somehow *Moonlighting* kept going where it could have imploded at any second. So the network brought me onto *Roseanne* to calm the waters and try and deal with her concerns.

It was more about the actress than it was about the strong female character she was playing. It was about me going into the lions den with a whip and a chair and dealing with an actor who could be very volatile. Although I must say she never raised her voice to me. Not once. To a lot of other people she did, but for some reason, never to me. I ended up doing that show for the better part of five seasons.

And then I developed a new show for Cybill because one day I suddenly thought, "Cybill Shepherd should be back on television. Why isn't she? Could I possibly work with her again?" I talked myself into it because I was thinking of a half hour sitcom and not an hour show -- he work hours are much different, much easier to deal with. You only shoot one or two days a week, the rest of the time is spent in rehearsal. There's no makeup or hair, or wardrobe to deal with on rehearsal days and that's an easier, more civilized way to live than doing an hour television show where you're in the makeup chair everyday at sunrise.

Another selling point was that there was no male lead in the show. The second lead was going to be female. I figured for those two reasons she'd be much happier, and for a time she was. But again, I was more drawn to the star involved

than I was to the fact that it was a show about a strong woman. Cybill got on board with my concept because it was loosely based on her life. She could relate to it and contribute her particular point of view, much like Roseanne had on *Roseanne*.

DM: What drew you to *Hot Properties*?

JD: The writer Suzanne Martin. I had done the pilot and a full season of a series with her called *Maybe It's Me*. I did *Hot Properties* primarily because of the writer/creator, much like I did *Moonlighting* because of Glenn. And yes, *Hot Properties* was about four strong female characters, but I didn't do it because it was about women. I did because of one woman --Suzanne Martin. I'm concerned, by the way, that comedies with female leads are sort of out of style right now. I think it's very hard to get one of those off the ground. I'll be interested to see how Jenna Elfman's show (*Courting Alex*) goes, because she, if anybody, has a chance to make it happen. If you look at, what's the recent one... *Emily's Reasons Why Not*, with Heather Graham. You would have thought with all the publicity they gave that show it should at least get sampled. But they put it on and nobody came. So I think shows with strong female leads are a very difficult sale right now.

DM: With *Emily*, ABC was trying to capitalize on the popularity of *Sex and the City*. I mean, *Hot Properties* was sort of like *Sex and The City* too.

JD: In some ways it was, yeah. I mean, both shows were about women living in New York but we were a four camera digital tape show shot mostly in front of a studio audience. They were a single-camera film show shot mostly on the streets of New York. They were very different shows.

DM: You get a film star like Heather Graham, and then you scratch your head when it gets cancelled so quickly, not given a chance when there is so much garbage on television that stays on the air.

JD: (Laughs)

DM: Because I'm not going to name them, but there are shows that are hits and you wonder why.

JD: Oh, I could name them too, but I won't. My list would contain a lot of reality shows. I think that's sort of the bane of my existence right now -- reality shows. They're clones of each other, and you just wonder how long that's going to continue to last. Of course, I'm guilty of watching *American Idol*, and we watched a couple of seasons of *Survivor*. That's about it for us. I look at some of these other things just to sample and see what they are, and I go "People are actually going to watch this?" And of course, they do!

DM: It's like a train wreck with some of these reality shows. At least *American Idol* is more of a talent contest.

JD: Yeah, but I love the people with no talent whatsoever who think they're just great singers. Are they deaf, or what?

DM: So this leads me into my next question. What do you think about the state of television today?

JD: What we just talked about. As you point out, I think I've done a lot of shows with strong female leads, and I think that's out of vogue now. Right now, I think it's very difficult to launch one of those. I think comedy in general, is in a very difficult place. It's very hard to put a sitcom on the air anymore and have it be successful. There are exceptions to that. My friend, Chuck Lorre, who created *Cybill* with me, found a formula with *Two and a Half Men*. Again, male leads, not a strong female lead.

DM: That show is like *The Odd Couple*.

JD: Yes, that's exactly what it is, but in a very contemporary good way. So he figured it out, but I don't know that comedy shows, especially with female leads, are going to have much of a chance in the near future. I think there are way too many reality shows being put on the air for all the wrong reasons, mostly because they're cheap to produce, inexpensive I should say. Every one of those shows that goes on the air takes a time slot away from a comedy or drama that could

find an audience. I think drama has obviously made a huge comeback. I'm a big fan of any show that has to do with lawyers and that sort of thing. I like *CSI*. I like a number of procedural shows like that.



DM: Speaking of shows with lawyers, do you like *Boston Legal*?

JD: I do like *Boston Legal*. I like it because it has such a light touch to it. It has that *Ally McBeal*-esque flavor that David Kelley can come up with. You know, it's uneven and sometimes it's outrageous, but it's taking the kinds of chances that we took on *Moonlighting*. And it's nice to see them getting away with that for the most part.

DM: Especially the over-the-top performances by James Spader and William Shatner.

JD: Oh yeah, you have got to admire it. I would have to say that David Kelley would probably admit being influenced by Glenn's writing on *Moonlighting*. I think he'd have to. He's a wonderful writer, don't get me wrong. He's as talented and prolific as any writer there is in television today, no question about it, but every now and then I'll be watching *Boston Legal* and I'll say that was a *Moonlighting* moment if I ever saw one.

DM: Have you watched *Medium*?

JD: I have, yes.

DM: Glenn did a 3D episode that *Moonlighting* was supposed to do.

JD: I shot that test for the 3D episode of *Moonlighting* out at Magic Mountain.

DM: What was the episode going to be about?

JD: I don't remember. I don't think we had figured that out. I think it was just a matter of wanting to do something in 3D for television and could it be done. It's not the same technique he used on *Medium*. The thing about the way we were going to shoot it was things had to be moving in a particular direction to become three dimensional. We filmed a merry-go-round, and it had to be going left to right and not right to left, otherwise it wouldn't be three dimensional. It was weird. We could only have done it in little pieces. You could not have done an entire episode that way, but it was really fun and interesting to experiment with it to see if it could be made to work. We talked about putting the 3D glasses in TV Guide, like he did on *Medium*. I'm glad he was finally able to do it.

DM: Are there any new projects you are working on that you would like to discuss?

JD: Well, I just finished *Hot Properties* and so I'm still sort of panting from that. I turned the last episode in about two days before it went on the air the end of December. So I've just started to try and focus on what I might be doing next. Up until a few weeks ago, it looked very promising that *Hot Properties* would be back on the air for the back nine episodes, but it didn't work out that way. So I don't know. I'm at the stage in my career where I can afford to be a little picky, and try to just work with people that I know I'm going to enjoy working with on projects that excite me. I'm at a place where I have the luxury of being able to be able to pick and choose a little bit, and I will be doing just that.