

KILLER SERIALS

BURN NOTICE AND *THE GLADES* BRING SCRIPTED TV PRODUCTION BACK TO SOUTH FLORIDA

BY ELIZABETH RAHE

When a decapitated woman turns up in a muddy creek in the fictional town of Palm Glade, it signals the beginning of Jim Longworth's homicide investigation career in Florida. It also marks the premiere of *The Glades* (10 p.m., July 11), an A&E series about Longworth, a Chicago cop who moves to the Sunshine State for sunshine and golf, but finds beaucoup murders – at least one per episode – to keep him off the links. The show is filmed at locations in South Florida and in a studio created in a former Pembroke Park carpet warehouse.

It's the second Fox Television Studios series being shot in South Florida. USA Network's *Burn Notice* (Thursdays, 9 p.m.), cable TV's highly ranked drama about the adventures of a discredited spy, is based in the old Coconut Grove Expo Center. Its fourth season began June 3, and the network has ordered seasons five and six.

Not since *Miami Vice* in the '80s has a successful scripted series been shot here. (Some productions, including *CSI Miami* and *Dexter*, use South Florida scenic shots but are primarily filmed in Southern California.) Spurred by the area's film-friendly environment and state incentives, the productions are bringing the real South Florida into focus on the small screen.

Gabrielle Anwar and Jeffrey Donovan, whose *Burn Notice* was just picked up for seasons five and six.

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Jeffrey Donovan plays a discredited spy working in South Florida with a former IRA operative, played by Gabrielle Anwar, in *Burn Notice*.

Lights! Camera! Incentives!

Exploding helicopters and car chases, stunt actors and extras, hotels and restaurants – TV and film producers spend money. Florida incentives entice them to spend their money here. *Burn Notice*, which received almost \$9.6 million in incentive in its first three seasons, spent more than \$55 million in Florida, according to state Film Commissioner Lucia Fishburne. Producers for *The Glades* expect to spend \$9.2 million locally for the first season, and the production is certified to receive about \$1.4 million in incentive. Although Florida incentives had fallen behind other states recently, a new five-year, \$242 million tax credit program is expected to fire up the industry here. “We are totally slammed with phone calls, emails. It’s a wonderful complaint to have,” Fishburne says.



USA NETWORK PHOTO: JUSTIN STEPHENS



Matt Passmore as Det. Jim Longworth with guest star Abby Pivaronas in *The Glades*, scheduled to debut July 11 on A&E.

GENE PAGE

BLUE SKIES AND HOT STUNTS STOKE *BURN NOTICE*

Burn Notice creator Matt Nix originally set his story in Newark, N.J., but USA Network convinced him to go for a blue-sky setting, like Miami. Resistant at first, Nix realized four pages into the script that down-and-out spy Michael Westen formed a contrast with the sunny setting. What brought the production to South Florida instead of, say, Southern California, was the state incentive program, which rewards producers for spending money in Florida.

“The fact that we ended up in Miami, shooting Miami for Miami, had everything to do with the incentives,” he says.

It has turned out to be a fortuitous locale. *Burn Notice* is consistently ranked among the top cable shows. This season’s opener, which had Westen dodging bullets in a South American jungle, scored 6.62 million viewers. (The jungle, by the way, was Miami’s Monkey Jungle). From South Beach hotels to Coral Gables bungalows, industrial plants to marinas, South Florida has provided a rich source of settings for Nix and his team of writers.

“We can write anything and we will find some version of it in the area,” Nix says, adding that South Florida is very production-friendly. “The fact that Miami is willing to let us blow up all the stuff we blow up and crash all those cars, and there are designated places to do that – that’s really awesome.”

Bruce Campbell, who plays Westen’s right-hand man, Sam Axe, calls South Florida a collision of cultures, which makes it a perfect setting for *Burn Notice* plots. “We have weird characters from all over the world on the show – like a Russian operative from the ’80s, Chechen rebels, Mexican bad guys. The show wouldn’t work in Des Moines, Iowa.”

Axe and the gun-toting, former IRA operative Fiona Glenanne (Gabrielle Anwar), help Westen (Jeffrey Donovan) attempt to unravel why he was burned – or blacklisted – as they help average citizens solve problems via spycraft. This season adds Coby Bell as fellow burned spy Jesse Garcia. Sharon Gless of *Cagney & Lacey* fame plays Westen’s manipulative but loving mother, Madeline.

Her scenes are often shot in the air-conditioned Coconut Grove studio, home to Madeline’s bungalow and Michael’s loft, but much of the show is produced on location, which presents some unique situations. For last season’s finale, for instance, a scene had to be rewritten because the speeding boat would violate a canal’s manatee protection zone. Then there’s the heat.

“When you’re standing on a rooftop in Fort Lauderdale surrounded by flaming helicopter parts, and it’s 110 degrees and 100 percent humidity, and all of your leads are wearing suits, it looks good, but it’s a challenge from that perspective,” Nix says.

The veteran crew is always up for the challenges, he says. “Because I got this crew that has done everything that has come through Miami, they’re pitching me ideas. They know how to do all the stunts they did on *Bad Boys*.”

Campbell calls the crew an eclectic weirdo family – “the kind

you’d find at a family reunion: ‘Oh there’s Uncle Joe...He takes naps under the sycamore tree at 2 o’clock.’ These people are really tight, an incredibly hard-working crew.”

For Nix, another advantage to working in South Florida is the abundance of café Cubano. “I’m a total coffee addict,” he says. “In Miami really good espresso is not a luxury; it’s a basic human right.”

UNDERCURRENT FLOWS THROUGH *THE GLADES*

Growing up in Hialeah, Clifton Campbell was a Boy Scout who spent a lot of time in the Everglades. When relatives came to visit, he noticed they went straight to the beach.

“I remember thinking that there’s so much more to Florida. I understand going to the beach, but go to the Everglades. It’s gorgeous. You’ll see things there you’ll never see again in your life.”

It stands to reason, then, that the new cop murder-mystery series he created, *The Glades*, shows the *other* side of Florida. “We take more advantage of the off-the-beaten path locations and the people who populate those worlds.”

Thus, there are episodes set in Ocala’s horse-breeding world, along Everglades canals and in the town of Pahokee, home of the Muck Bowl football rivalry, where young men build speed and agility chasing rabbits in sugar-cane fields. Scenes are shot within 30 miles of home base, with area locales representing farther-off Florida.

Although the stories are written with a humorous touch, Campbell says, underneath that blue sky there’s a primordial swamp – a

juxtaposition that’s mirrored in homicide detective Jim Longworth. “His investigation style is in your face, at times funny and to some extent totally disregarding procedure, but he captures the essence. Like the environment, there’s something going on under the surface.”

Australian actor Matt Passmore, who plays Longworth, is experiencing the area for the first time, traveling from beaches to high rises to sugar-cane fields. “All I knew about Florida before was Will Smith film clips and hot girls and great mojitos,” he says on a break between scenes. “Our show gets to skip between the big city and swampy creepiness, which I personally am really getting off on.”

Although the pilot was shot in the Clearwater/Tampa area, producers switched to Broward County for the series. “There is a little bit of learning curve that they are going through on the West Coast,” Campbell says. “When you’re under the pressure we’re under, it’s easier to go someplace that already gets what you’re asking for.”

The pressure has been intense: Producers began shooting April 27 for the July 11 premiere, with each episode being completed in seven days. The Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward Film Commission and the local community have been welcoming and helpful to the production, he says, especially in making arrangements for locations and traffic control.

One factor beyond control is the South Florida hurricane season. “A lot of the department heads have never been through a hurricane,” Campbell says. “It will be very interesting if we have a heavy season.”

Still, he plans to use the phenomenon to his advantage, at least as a story element. An episode will feature a killing spree triggered by the fear and anxiety churned up by a hurricane.

LIVING LA VIDA LOCAL

HAILING FROM AUSTRALIA, ENGLAND AND POINTS AROUND THE USA, THE STARS OF *BURN NOTICE* AND *THE GLADES* OFFER DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON SOUTH FLORIDA CLIMATE, CULTURE AND CRITTERS.

BY ELIZABETH RAHE



Gabrielle Anwar has danced the tango with Al Pacino in *Scent of a Woman*, been named one of *People* magazine's most beautiful people and played the fiery Princess Margaret in Showtime's *The Tudors*. She exchanged her corset for a bikini to portray the heat-packing, IED-rigging Fiona Glenanne in *Burn Notice*.

However, Anwar claims to be a more peaceful sort, quite content to be in a hammock between two palms in her back yard. With *Burn Notice* being picked up for seasons five and six, she recently moved her three children, ages 16, 9 and 6, from California to her Coconut Grove home, which she calls her little niche of Old Florida.

On the climate: "Having grown up in England, I feel like I'm still defrosting from my childhood. I'm never put off by the heat, even in the midst of summer. It's wonderful to raise children here...We're so outdoorsy. My little kids are brown as berries. They are two little cappuccino chocolates."

On guest star Burt Reynolds: "I believe he knew every person on the crew. He's been around in Florida and in the entertainment industry for so long, and he was just having a ball. He was such a delight – we couldn't get enough of him." [His episode is set to air July 15.]

On dinner with Reynolds and Jeffrey Donovan at The Forge: "What better place than The Forge for a delicious meal?"

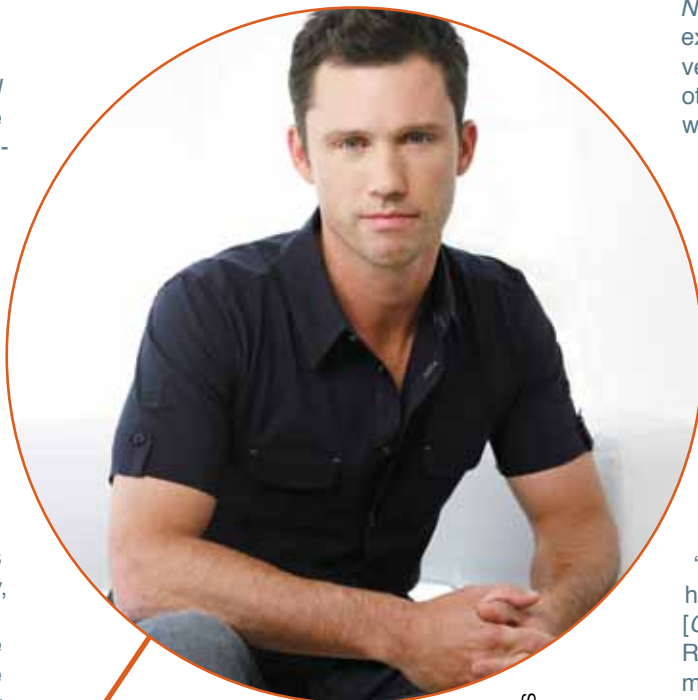
On her connection with The Forge owner Shareef Malnik: "Ah. Well, I guess you could call me a gourmet."

When **Bruce Campbell** (*Evil Dead* trilogy, *Bubba Ho-Tep*) wraps the season playing the well-connected ex-Navy SEAL Sam Axe in *Burn Notice*, he plans to return to Oregon to shoot *Bruce vs. Frankenstein*. In 2008 he released *My Name is Bruce*, in which washed-up B-movie actor Bruce Campbell – played by, well, Bruce Campbell – is pressed into service to save the town of Gold Lick from the evil Guan-di monster. (More at www.bruce-campbell.com.)

The production will take advantage of Oregon's film industry incentive program. Perhaps Florida's new incentives will entice Campbell to stay here while on hiatus and vanquish some tropical menace...say, the dreaded Chupacabra.

On his yearly migration: "It's a huge shock to me to crawl out of Oregon like a mole and become the tan party boy. It's such a different world. I've learned to adapt...I wear special clothing to wick away the moisture from my body."

On risky business: "We're always doing strange things – like dumping automatic weapons into the Miami River across from a construction zone. I always wonder what people think when they see us work. It's tricky for my character. I'm often on buildings with high-powered rifles. I'm always thinking some guy will look up and take a pot shot at me. We make sure the police are nearby, just out of frame."



Jeffrey Donovan (*Changeling, Come Early Morning*) who plays blacklisted spy Michael Westen in *Burn Notice*, lobbied for the film and TV incentives package at the Florida Capitol in November. According to *St. Petersburg Times* blog *The Buzz*, he told of a flower vendor in Hialeah whom the film crew came to know. When a writer included a flower vendor in an episode, the show paid the merchant \$10,000 to rent his shop for a day. The local impact for that gentleman was enormous, he said, illustrating the economic boon that production brings. Donovan, who has long lived in the LA area, also announced that he was establishing Florida residency.

On the climate: "I actually love the weather. I love that the climate is constantly being washed and rinsed. You're living in the Caribbean in the United States, and sometimes it's incredible blue skies and sometimes it's an incredible thunderstorm that kind of screams through, but I love that part of Florida."

USA NETWORK PHOTO: JUSTIN STEPHENS



Multiple Emmy-winning actress **Sharon Gless**, who plays Michael Westen's overbearing, chain-smoking mom in *Burn Notice*, is a 15-year resident of Miami's exclusive Fisher Island. However, the veteran of *Cagney & Lacey* and many other series tried to keep that a secret when the cast was shooting the pilot. "I wanted to hang out with everyone else in the hotel," she says.

Last year she appeared before the Miami City Commission with the producers to argue for keeping the *Burn Notice* studio in the Coconut Grove Expo Center, rather than turning it into a park. The commission unanimously passed the resolution for the studio to stay through 2010 or longer, with rental funds being allocated for future waterfront improvements.

On shooting so close to home: "I've never been married and lived at home while shooting a series. My husband [*Cagney & Lacey* producer Barney Rosenzweig] says he doesn't know if our marriage will survive the series."

On working conditions: "Most of my work is in an air-conditioned sound stage, in an exact copy of a bungalow, or in Michael's loft. Occasionally, they let me out. [This season] I'm working in a bank. They are starting to use me in their capers."



Aussie **Matt Passmore** shot *McLeod's Daughters* on a working farm outside of Adelaide, South Australia, where he was often swatting flies. In *The Glades*, shot in South Florida, he has switched to mosquitoes.

"It's funny when you're on set and all the mozzies come out at a certain time. It's almost like it's on cue."

Passmore plays transplanted Chicago homicide detective Jim Longworth, a fish out of water in his new Florida home. "That's me," Passmore says of his own alien status. "I'm gasping for air on the beach."

On the climate: "We have had some very brutal days, shooting in sugar-cane fields and alongside creeks. We have a mainly Florida crew. No matter how much they see me sweltering, they're like, 'Yeah, just wait till July. That breeze you're feeling? You can kiss it goodbye.'"

On acclimating: "Growing up in Queensland I was only 20 minutes from Gold Coast, so I'm a sun, surf, beach-bum kind of guy. This environment feels very familiar and excitingly new at the same time."

On the shooting schedule: "We shoot until we can't shoot anymore. Any time I'm feeling absolutely knackered [exhausted] and want to have a bit of a whinge [whine], I just look at the crew and think how hard they're working."



Kiele Sanchez (ABC's *Lost*, WB's *Related*) says she is intrigued by life's contrasts, the dark as well as the light. That's what drew her to *The Glades*. "It's the Florida I had never seen before."

Sanchez plays Callie Cargill, a medical student with a 12-year-old son and a husband in prison, who catches the eye of Jim Longworth. A Chicago native who now lives in LA, Sanchez was surprised by the beauty of South Florida beaches, especially the clear water. "I'm terrified of sharks, and I feel like I can see them coming."

On hair: "The humidity seems to be my biggest enemy. My hair gets out of control. On set they are always trying to keep it looking good or consistent."

On critters: "My dad is a jockey agent... and he usually spends winters in Florida. I told him we were shooting out in this field in the middle of nowhere, and he said, 'You know, you've got to watch out for pythons and anacondas and gators.'"