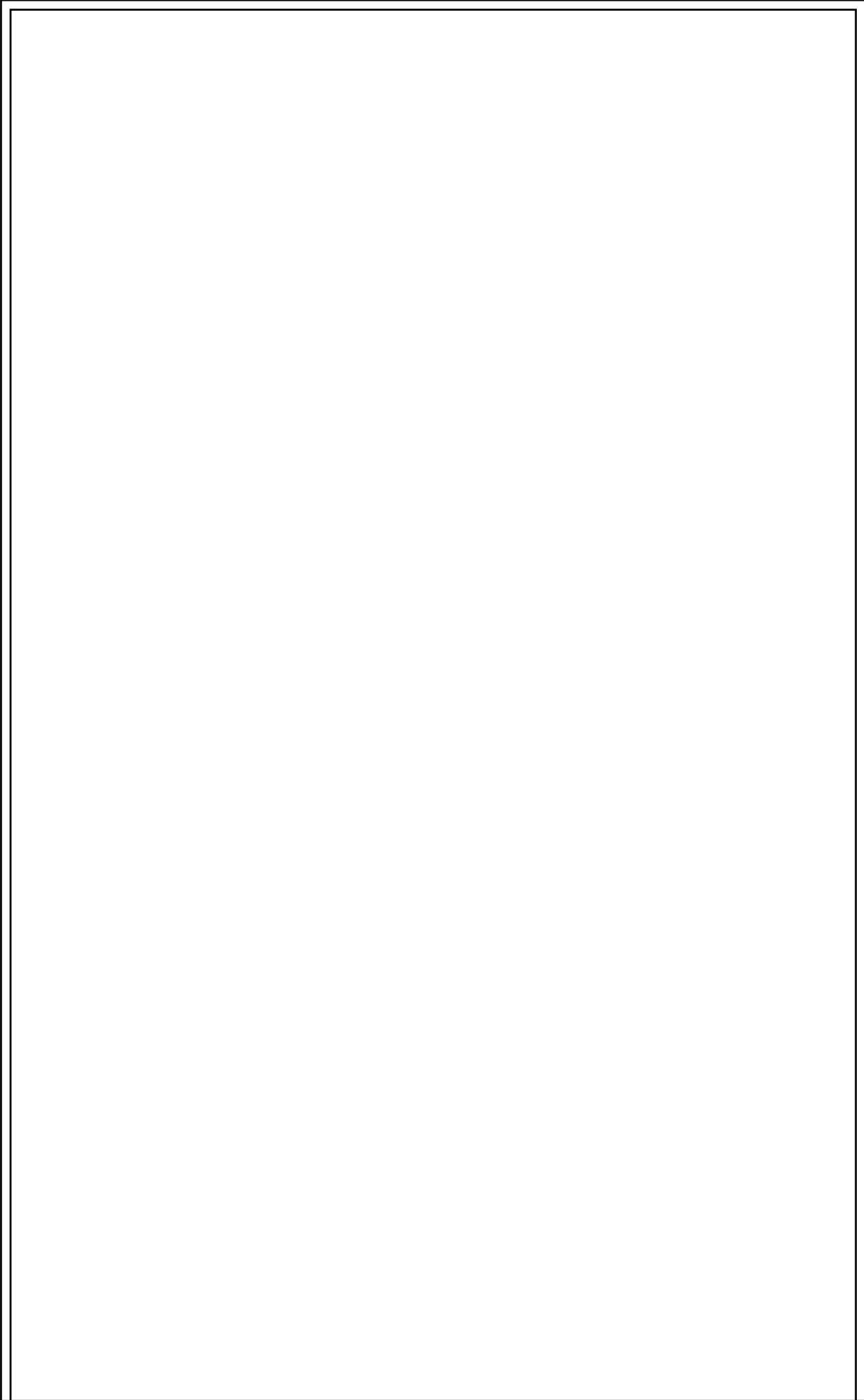


Interview: Shane West, Producer Craig Silverstein on the Season Finale of The CW’s ‘Nikita’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 17, 2012 - 11:14pm

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CHICAGO – Friday, May 18th, marks the season finale of The CW Network’s “Nikita,” the series focusing on a rogue assassin portrayed by Maggie Q. Co-star Shane West and Producer Craig Silverstein previewed the end of the Season Two at Chicago’s C2E2.





Actor Shane West at C2E2 in Chicago, April 2012
Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Shane West portrays Michael, Nikita's trainer-turned-partner in the second season, as they seek to bring down their former agency, the Division. Craig Silverstein is Executive Producer and has written 44 episodes of the first two seasons, and The CW Network announced there will be a third season of "Nikita" on May 11th. West and Silverstein appeared at the 2012 Comic and Entertainment Expo (C2E2) in Chicago last month and HollywoodChicago.com participated in a roundtable Q&A session with both on the subject of "Nikita."

Question: What has been most satisfying for you about the development of the character Michael over the last two seasons?

Shane West: Season One was the only one where I knew what was going to happen with Michael, thanks to Craig, who told me the things he wanted to happen with Michael in that year. Miraculously, all those things happened, so by the end of Season One I was completely satisfied. This year has been great, but confusing, but we all knew that would happen. Nikita and Michael are together, but how do we keep this interesting? For Maggie and I, it's been wonderfully frustrating, because we loved all the episodes, but didn't know where it was going. It was hard to play certain moments sometimes. It's been a balancing act, but I think fans will be very happy how it plays out.

Question: What do you think Nikita' represents in a post 9/11 society? Since the concept of the film and TV 'La Femme Nikita' was developed in the 1990s, do you think your current incarnation of the character fits more in line in a post 9/11 atmosphere?

Craig Silverstein: We took our cue from the Bourne film series, in the way it articulates a dissatisfaction and paranoia that used to exist in the 1970s regarding our own government. She's fighting against an abuse of power in that government. And what is different in this show from the 1990s TV show, is that the villains in the previous series were comic book or graphic novel types. We have Al Qaeda in our show, we deal more with the real world, with one foot in and one foot out, that's how it's more in line with the present.

Question: As actors, are they still able to surprise you as to where the twists and turns go?

West: Oh yeah, everyone, we talk about it all the time. Season One we felt was surprising, but in comparison to the current season it really wasn't. At least the basis was that all the characters were in Division and everything spouted out of that. This year, the surprises have been constant. Recurring characters didn't come back, an injury to Maggie changes a fight scene, Amanda getting together with Ari, we're just constantly amused. The surprise for the end of this year we felt could be coming, but it's how it happens is also surprising. The way they go about it is one of the most unique things on the show. We've been pleasantly surprised, so far.

Question: There are many bad guys on the show. How do you determine who will come out on top from week to week?

Silverstein: This year it was about a divide within Division, between Amanda and Percy. So it was a natural struggle about who is on top. We started with Percy in prison, obviously, so the natural arc was about him breaking out, and how he has taken over, with Amanda out. So what you have family falling apart in the bad guy world, and a family getting stronger in the Nikita world. That's the general plan in the beginning, and we took the necessary steps to make it seem believable.



Shane West and Maggie Q of 'Nikita'
Photo credit: The CW Network

Question: Do you prefer the action sequences or more intimate, emotional scenes as an actor?

West: I naturally prefer the emotional scenes, as a dramatic actor it's more fun to do those things. The action sequences are there, yesterday I had three lines of dialogue and then ended up crawling in a sewer. [laughs] We call those 'Die Hard' moments. It's fun for the kid in you, and as a dude, for being cool. Those are moments of joy and ecstasy if it goes right. But it is the dramatic scenes that are fulfilling, you feel like you've earned your paycheck, and you've made something that will last a long time for the viewers.

Question: You mentioned in the panel that you weren't expecting how the Ari and Amanda story would go. How did that emerge in your show planning?

Silverstein: We kept Amanda mysterious, and when she was going to make her play, it started at the end of episode seven when she told Ryan that she wanted him to help take down Oversight. So she clearly had her own motivation, and we had to ask, 'what is it' and we were forced to answer what she is about. And in trying to figure that out, we had a bunch of different things. We had crazy ideas, but ultimately expected. So the idea that she was doing it for love and was in love with Ari, kind of two snakes conspiring together, seemed to be the right one.

Question: With the director McG being listed as an executive producer, what influence does his style have on the overall look of the series?

Silverstein: It's just an overall slick sort of thing, but McG and myself would probably attribute that to the pilot that Danny Cannon [another executive producer] directed.

Question: Finally, what can we expect towards the end of Season Two?

Silverstein: There will be a major member of the cast dying. Fans may be sad, it all depends on how they feel about them.

Question: Will that be crushing to Michael?

West: I don't know if it will be crushing. It will emotionally affect all the characters on the show. For Michael, a little less crushing than other people, but it will mess with his head.

The "Nikita" season finale is May 18th, 8pm ET/7pm CT on The CW Network. See local listings for channel location. Featuring Maggie Q, Shane West, Lynsey Fonseca, Aaron Stanford, Melinda Clarke and Xander Berkeley.



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Source URL (retrieved on Apr 20 2024 - 9:50am):

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