

PN: I liked it when Donny Crane (Freddie Prinze, Jr.) came on board. We learned a lot about Denny's background. And Shore is a very interesting character as well, but I just don't know how much I really want to learn because sometimes if you don't know enough, the mystique is what keeps it interesting.

DM: The other thing is that Alan was supposed to butt heads with Brad, which can be really explosive, but you're not seeing that as much. Then you have a lot of guest stars being added to the cast and it squeezes the regulars' time on screen.

PN: Yes. That's true. That does happen. It is true that the Brad/Shore element is less prevalent than it used to be. But maybe it's sort of played its course out. I like Paul Lewiston. I like Rene as a character because he's very important in the show. He's the grounded person who's there to keep the company looking legitimate. Schmidt is the same way so she's a great element to have in this whole ensemble. I really like the fact that she had a prior relationship with Crane – this raises the stakes for fun, nervous moments whenever they're together.

DM: Now, you went into this earlier. The shooting style of the series is like a documentary with hand held cameras, swift zooms, and I also noticed the directors like to focus on the hands. You see a lot of hand shots. Can you shed

some light on some of these choices? The shooting style of the series?

PN: Bill D'Elia, our executive producer, is an excellent director. He directed the first show, which is sort of our pilot, and he directed episode number fourteen, *'Till We Meet Again*. The style was his idea

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and I think it's a great choice because it differentiates us from other shows. I like the way the camera has movement, even if it's subtle movement with the slight push-ins when the actors say certain dialogue, it gives it a texture that's really interesting and can emphasize what's being said. The idea of quick cuts coming into a scene when you see the hands, or the coffee mug, or the books or whatever, was Bill D'Elia's idea. Steve Robin, our supervising producer, was also involved in that as well. He's given us some ideas about the quick cuts that transition us to the scenes. Steve also worked with Danny Lux on the musical

cues that give energy to the cuts. Craig Bench edited the first show so I'm sure that the three of them together refined this technique. But the original idea came from Bill. The film crew will first shoot the scenes conventionally with all the proper sizes and angles and every scene is shot with two or three cameras at once. They'll maybe do the first couple of takes without moving the camera a lot. And then they'll go in and start moving the camera around so you really have to look at every take, because no two takes will be exactly alike, as far as where the camera will be at certain points of the dialogue.

DM: Now, based on various message boards that I have read, there is a demand for *Boston Legal* to be released on DVD, but it seems like David Kelley doesn't really put his shows out on DVD. Any discussions about *Boston Legal* on DVD?

PN: I'm unaware of any discussions now about DVD's for *Boston Legal*; that's usually handled by business affairs. I know from experience that music is an important factor in the process.

DM: Music rights are expensive...

PN: Yes. But I hope that sometime in the future we have many seasons of *Boston Legal* to release on DVD.

DM: Me too. Now, you've been in the business for over 20 years. How has it changed?

PN: Well, post production has gone through an electronic revolution that the rest of the industry hasn't experienced yet. There's a bit of a revolution happening with the cameras on set because more and more shows are being shot on 24P, which is a high definition video format that is looking more and more like film. We still shoot on film, most shows do still shoot on film. But as they get better with the 24P look, then that will sort of revolutionize the way things are shot on set. Makeup will have to be done differently, art directors will have to adjust the way they do things. But as far as post production is concerned, in my lifetime as a film editor/producer, I've seen us go from film to high-tech digital editing. There was a five year period where there were all kinds of editing systems being tried out, like Ediflex, and Editdroid, Montage, Lightworks, and so on. Now Avid is the standard and that's what 90% of the business is cutting on, for features as well as television. So there's been a re-learning curve for many editors in how to edit electronically. I've edited both on film and computer. I prefer computer far more because you can come

up with many, many different versions of a scene in a short amount of time and also have the ability to play music with it and sound effects and that's made me a better editor because I'm able to finesse scenes. When you're cutting on film, you're really limited by time and how many versions you can have, so I just think you can make things ultimately better. Obviously, I'm working with some editors and assistant editors who have never been involved with film. But they're just as good at their job, if not better, than if they'd worked with film. So I don't think that that's made a big difference. It's just something I have in my background. One big difference over the years is that the editorial style in general is definitely more aggressive. I think MTV has made an impact. I think shows like *NYPD Blue*, *ER*, and *Homicide* have made an impact. I mean, if you look at something the way it was cut 20 years ago it looks to me a lot different from the way things are edited now, with the exception of *Moonlighting*. *Moonlighting* really was ahead of its time. It was very aggressive and it was thoughtful and unique.

DM: Any other upcoming projects you would like to discuss?

PN: Well, at this point, the other projects that I've heard about have all been pilots that will be shooting this spring. There might be a movie of the week that I get on during the hiatus. Another new David Kelley show is *Haley's Comet*, which Jonathan Pontell has developed and is executive producer of, and he's directing the pilot as well. It's about a young woman who is a medical student and she's recovering from a devastating disease. She works as an intern in an ER as part of her medical training. They'll be shooting the pilot in March and hopefully the series will be picked up. But I'm very happy here on *Boston Legal*.

SPECIAL NOTE: *Boston Legal* is currently on hiatus and will return in the fall of 2005-'06 on ABC.

ORIGINALITY

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PHILIP NEEL'S FILMOGRAPHY

EDITOR

Movies/ TV Series

"Boston Legal" (2004) TV Series

"Boston Public" (2000) TV Series

"Ally" (1999) TV Series

"Ally McBeal" (1997) TV Series

"The Cape" (1996) TV Series

The Cape (1996) (TV)

Deception: A Mother's Secret (1991) (TV)

... aka Tell Me No Lies

"Midnight Caller" (1988) TV Series (as Philip Neel)

"Moonlighting" (1985) TV Series (Editor: 1987)

"Remington Steele" (1982) TV Series (episodes include: *Beg, Borrow or Steele, Coffee, Tea or Steele, Forged Steele, A Good Night's Steele, Have I Got a Steele for You, High Flying Steele, Hounded Steele, License to Steele, Lofty Steele, Now You Steele It, Now You Don't, Puzzled Steele, Santa Claus Is Coming to Steele, Scene Steelers, Steele Among the Living, Steele Belted, Steele Blue Yonder, Steele Searching (Part 1), Steele Spawning, Steele Trap, Steele Your Heart Away and Steele's Gold*)

PRODUCER

Movies/ TV Series

DeMarco Affairs (2004) (TV) (producer)

"Boston Public" (2000) TV Series (co-producer)
(producer) (2003)

"Malibu Shores" (1996) TV Series (associate producer)

"SeaQuest DSV" (1993) TV Series (producer)

... aka SeaQuest 2032 (USA: new title)

SeaQuest DSV (1993) (TV) (associate producer)

"Moonlighting" (1985) TV Series (producer) (1988-1989)

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