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DEAN CAIN

**Kevin Matossian's Latest
Film Finds A Super Talent**

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When the elusive tentacles of fame are cast upon an unsuspecting performer, many are unprepared for the imminent gravity of success and often fall prey to excess or ego. But not this guy.

Dean Cain has experienced the sweet taste of success and the bitter fruit of typecasting. However, neither of these seems to have cost him his affable nature. You can feel the warmth of his spirit even through the overcast coolness of a coastal Southern California day. He is in Long Beach finishing the filming of some final scenes of his new CBS series, *Clubhouse*, while he takes some not so approved time out to be photographed for the cover of this issue of *Mosaic*. Remarkably congenial, Cain exudes the manliness of an action star juxtaposed with the gentle sensibility of a nurturing dad. Even in the throws of an insane schedule he remains jovial and the “kinda guy you just want to have a beer with.”

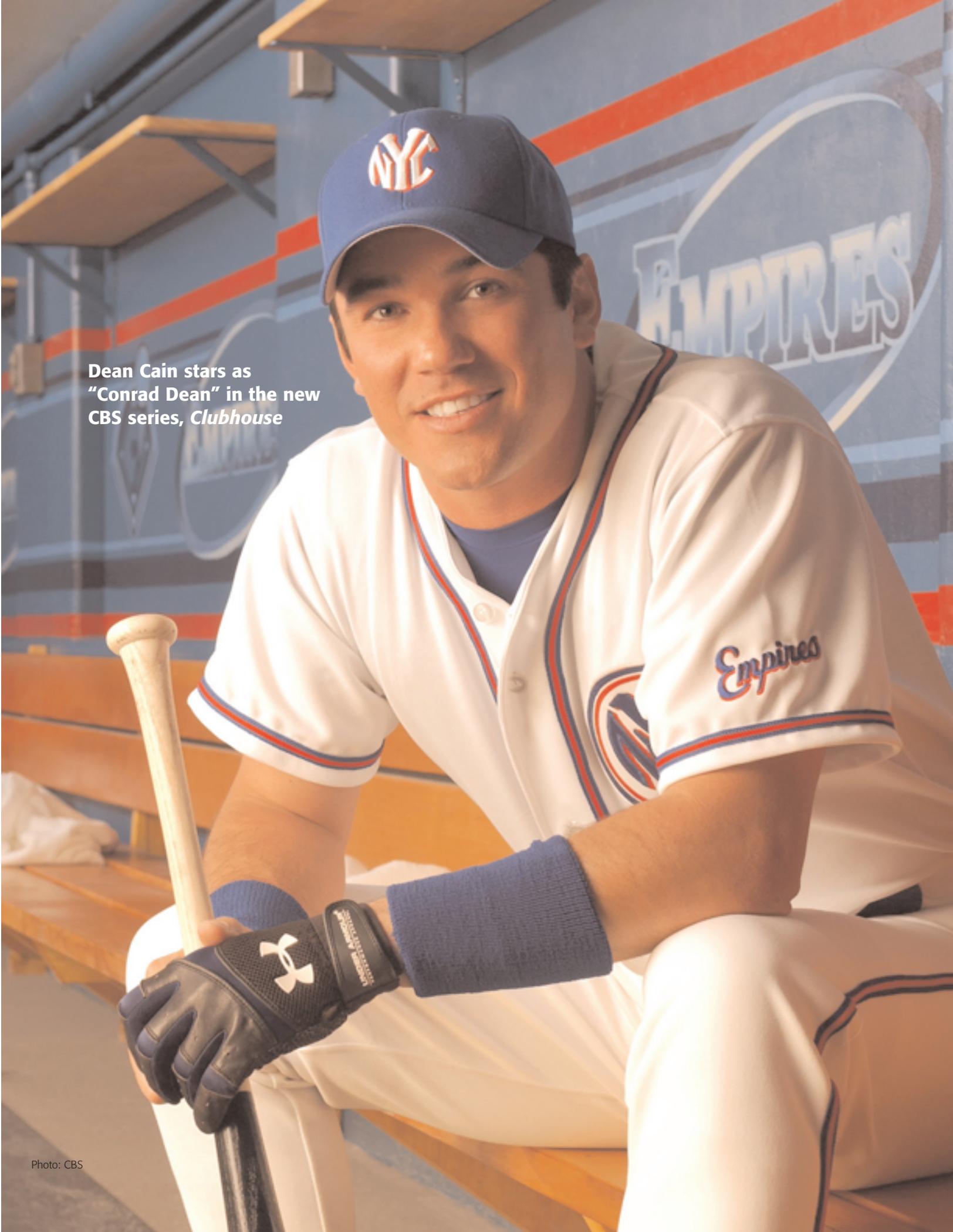
Lost and Found

Dean Cain finds himself lost in Kevin Matossian's newest independent feature, but finds himself an improved career along the way. By **Ramon Alexander Jaime**
Photos **Don Q. Hannah**

Cain's most high-profile work the past few years has been as the host of TBS's *Ripley's Believe It or Not!* While Ripley's has been one of TBS's top-rated shows and also a huge success for Cain, the show, produced by Cain's Angry Dragon

Entertainment unit, isn't exactly the kind of gig that has casting agents knocking down his door. “I don't think people realize what a fantastic actor Dean is. That's the problem when you play Superman. People typecast you,” says Deborah Joy LeVine, a creator of *Lois & Clark* who worked with Cain when he had a recurring role as a police detective on her Lifetime series *The Division*. “But Dean's got everything. He's got great comic timing. His dramatic instincts are terrific. Plus, he's incredibly handsome—women just go nuts over him.”

Perhaps that rough-hewn quality is helping him overcome a good guy image that until recently, limited his career with a series of bland roles that didn't explore the actor's full potential. Cain loves to work, but because of his desire to stretch and exercise his ability as an actor, he's accepted roles to keep up his craft not to win awards. Although he has been in a variety of movies since *Lois & Clark* ended in 1997, he didn't have very many savory roles until *The Broken Heart's Club* in 2000, where he received excellent reviews in his role as a self-involved jock. He followed that with a coveted role as Denzel Washington's menacing rival in the noir-thriller *Out of Time*, playing a former professional football player turned shady operator. A role that garnered him critical acclaim for his performance. “Getting the opportunity to be in a film like that was what I've been waiting for,” says Cain. He further distanced himself from the good guy club with his recent role in the highly rated TV movie *The Perfect Husband: The Laci Peterson Story*. Working those roles, unsavory or not, has paid off in a big way. According to Darren Lemke, the writer and director of *Lost*, Cain completely shouldered the weight of his role. “He carried the film



Dean Cain stars as
"Conrad Dean" in the new
CBS series, *Clubhouse*

completely on his own. He did his job times ten. He brought so many emotional peaks to his character it was amazing to watch. He's a fantastic actor and I was thrilled to work with him."

The casting of Cain wasn't simple. While discussing the possibility of Cain taking the lead role, there were changes that would need to be made to make the character believable. "The main character is a broken down character. Dean Cain is not a broken down kinda guy," Lemke recalls. "So we tweaked the character, and as a result, improved the path of the film." Cain had his own ideas about the character and according to Lemke, "It really jelled and became this group effort to get the character to where he should be. It was a group effort that paid off. Dean did a phenomenal job."

The role of Jeremy Stanton in *Lost* continues to show Cain's strength as an actor. In the film, he plays a bank executive who believes that life is what you make of it, makes a fateful decision to take a short cut on that road to success with tragic results. The character had such depth and emotional gravity, that Cain, upon first reading the script, hated the ending. "I took the script and threw it across the room," Cain recalled. "I couldn't believe this guy would risk everything like that. I couldn't imagine that. But I know that there are people in the world like that so I agreed to take the role."

Producer Kevin Matossian and director Darren Lemke both admitted that the biggest challenge for the movie was finding the right actor to play the lead role. "The biggest challenge was finding the



Dean Cain plays Jeremy Stanton, who contemplates his future in the independent film, "Lost"



perfect Jeremy. At the end of the day, this is a one-man show. The whole movie depended on a reaction to action. Who would we want to see in a car for two hours? Really, hands down was to find the right guy. And Dean Cain laid it down perfectly" says Lemke.

Shooting the movie had its challenges. Operating out of a hangar in Palmdale, California, the seemingly easy to shoot movie was anything but. Sandstorms, unpredictable weather and sinkholes all proved to test the patience and tempers of the cast and crew. "The car I was driving got stuck in the sand. So we had to get the car out of the sand and had to get a truck to pull it out. But then the truck that was supposed to rescue the car got stuck, too. So we had to have the truck that was supposed to rescue my car be rescued by another truck," Cain recalls.

Cain grew up in Malibu with a number of friends who ended up making it big in show business, including Sean Penn, Charlie Sheen and Emilio Estevez. But his early life wasn't as auspicious. Born in Mount Clemens, Mich., he never met his

biological father, who separated from his mother, actress Sharon Thomas, while she was pregnant with Cain (his brother, Roger, was 2 at the time). A few years later Thomas and the boys moved to California, where she met Cain's adoptive father, Christopher, who was raised on a ranch in South Dakota and had gone west to pursue a singing career. "My dad is a cowboy and is very much a leader. While I was growing up, he was always giving me folksy advice that I never understood, about trees and roots and life—you know, that kind of stuff," Cain says with a laugh. "My mom, meanwhile, is an actress. She's flashy and full of life. I'm somewhere in between."

Signed by the Buffalo Bills after graduating from Princeton in 1988, Cain blew out his knee three days before his first pre-season NFL game and moved back to California to recuperate. "It was a tough time for me," he says. "All I'd ever done was play sports and go to school. I was really good at both, and in a span of three months both those things were gone." In their place he took acting lessons, eventually landing guest roles on ABC's *Life Goes On* and NBC's *A Different World*. In 1992, he got a big break with his memorably steamy turn as Brenda's Paris fling in four episodes of *Beverly Hills, 90210*.

Fast forward to 2004. Cain now returns to a uniform of a different kind. He's replaced the Superman tights with baseball pinstripes. As the lead in the new CBS series, *Clubhouse*, Cain plays Conrad Dean, the team's captain and star third baseman and one of the boy's all-time idols, who takes on the role of an older brother. The series has already received positive reviews and is undoubtedly one of the networks' strongest series to debut this season.

But as far as Cain is concerned, the best role that he's had is the one that he'll have for a very long time – as a dad. He is the doting father of 4-year-old Christopher. "My son teaches me patience, understanding, responsibility – things about myself and my ego. I mean, how much ego can you have when you're dealing with a toddler who's having a meltdown because you've asked him to wash his hands?" Cain prides himself on being a terrific dad, a role he wishes many other men would play. For now, he's got a full plate: an active son, a new series and several new movies in the pipeline. Unlike his character in *Lost*, Cain has found his way. And he didn't even have to ask for directions. III

Faith. Perhaps a natural byproduct of being a minister's son, Kevin Matossian, producer of the independent film *Lost*, has enough of it that he's been able to convince some of Hollywood's typically elusive talent to join him in his new endeavor. Whether it's faith, confidence or just plain tenaciousness, Matossian is so passionate about his project that he could get just about anyone on board. He's just that inspiring.

His current film, *Lost*, follows the story of Jeremy Stanton (Dean Cain) who works for a bank and is lost in a haze of creditors, bill collectors and the strain of maintaining, to his family, the appearance that all is well and perfect. Though this movie is about a person getting caught up with taking the easy way out, Matossian

is just the opposite. Credited with being one of the most determined and hardest working neophyte producers in Hollywood, he relentlessly pursues his projects with the fervor of a pit bull, never letting go. It's that determination that has everyone around him convinced that he will soon be a major player in the entertainment industry. Darren Lemke, writer and director of *Lost*, said, "The one thing that I can say about Kevin is that I've never met a man with more determination and fire. In this town people get excited for about a week. For a year and a half this man made this film. The rest of us just went along for the ride."

Matossian, 30, perfectly groomed in his trademark goatee, sits comfortably but with an overflowing energy that it's easy to get caught up in his enthusiasm whatever the topic of conversation. His foray into filmmaking started, in his words, "backwards." His road to producing was a result of an investment gone sour. "At the time the internet was going gangbusters. I took cash or stock with some investments. The plan was that if one out of ten succeeded then it would be worth it." One of those investments was with Rascal Entertainment and like so many other entrepreneurs, his friends and family were involved. "I didn't want that investment to go south, so I tried to salvage the company however I could." Matossian took over the company, including the books and closely studied their business: their strengths and their weaknesses.

This crash course education introduced him to the managerial aspects of filmmaking – raising financing, distributing films and producing. "It literally came out of survival because I didn't want to lose what I eventually lost, but in some ways it was a



Finding His Way

Producer Kevin Matossian doesn't need directions – he knows exactly where he's going.

By **Ramon Alexander Jaime**
Photos **Don Q. Hannah**



Kevin Matossian and Dean Cain on the set of "Lost"

whole lot cheaper than getting a Ph.D." That loss was spun into a company called Greenlight Studios which eventually became SilverCrest Entertainment, where Matossian sits as its CEO.

Though his focus is producing, his first taste of Hollywood was as an actor. Smitten with the acting bug at an early age, he attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Hollywood. But there was a fundamental flaw with his new career – he hated the audition process. "Not because I didn't like the challenge, I just didn't like being treated like cattle," Matossian recalls.

Not having many acting jobs that kept food on the table, he had to face reality. His father, Joe Matossian, always supported his son in his endeavors but felt that a back-up plan was in order. He encouraged his son to obtain some sort of professional training. "You've gotta get a license or degree or something" Matossian recalls his dad saying. Naturally the plan was to earn money to

fuel his real passion – entertainment. He received a real estate and mechanics license and went right back into acting. "Dad and Mom are both realists. I couldn't ask for more supportive parents. But they wanted to cushion me from any disappointment which is why they wanted me to have a backup plan." His father, Minister to the Union for the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, supported Kevin as much as any parent would. "This is what God chose for me," his father advised, "But you can be and do whatever you want to do."

Working other jobs to keep afloat while he pursued his interest in theatre and film, he had a serendipitous encounter with a man who would eventually change his life – and his career. Matossian was helping a friend at The Burning Leaf, a cigar shop in Pasadena, when two men strolled into the private club without a membership. Matossian invited them in anyway

and struck up a conversation during which the topic of Armenians came up. One of the men mentioned that the minister at his church was Armenian. "That minister happened to be a friend of my dad's," Matossian said. "We talked for hours. I had no idea who he was and he didn't know what I did." The evening ended and just before the men were about to leave Matossian asked, in passing, what they did for a living. "We're producers" they replied. Matossian recalls "I felt terrifically disappointed, because here's this guy that I just sat with and had a great conversation and then he tells me that he was a producer. Great. Everybody in LA thinks they're a producer." The man who Matossian nearly dismissed was Ralph Winter, producer of the *Star Trek* film franchise, *Planet of the Apes* and *X-Men*, whose films have topped over one billion dollars at the box office. Noticing his disbelief, Steve Young, the gentleman who accompanied Winter, reiterated to Matossian "That's Ralph Winter. *The Ralph Winter.*"

Not being the kind of guy who would let any opportunity pass, Matossian gathered enough bravado to ask Winter if it would be OK to call him. Nearly a year later they finally re-connected. "Now Ralph is a shareholder and a member of the board of advisors to SilverCrest Entertainment," Matossian

continued, "and he's a mentor and a big brother. I've been truly blessed with him and the people that I've been fortunate to meet and surround myself with."

Matossian is uncharacteristically modest, considering he single-handedly has assembled a stellar group of Hollywood heavyweights to help bring his first project to life. "Any success that we have had to this point, I'd love to take credit, but it's actually because of the incredible people that I'm surrounded with" Matossian says. But those who work with him would beg to differ. Winter, who is now filming *Fantastic Four* in Vancouver, says, "I decided to work with Kevin because I think he has good taste, and again, because he is trying to build something, starting small and proving himself, and I admire those qualities." Dean Cain said of Matossian, "He is completely a man of his word. And the hardest working guy on all levels."

He's as busy as ever now, promoting *Lost* and being the director for this year's Arpa International Film Festival. Whatever undertakings Matossian chooses there certainly will be a legion of believers not far behind. After all, his faith and perseverance are the reasons for his success and he has conversely earned the faith of those who believe in his work – and him as a person. III



"Lost" stars Dean Cain and Danny Trejo with Producer Kevin Matossian