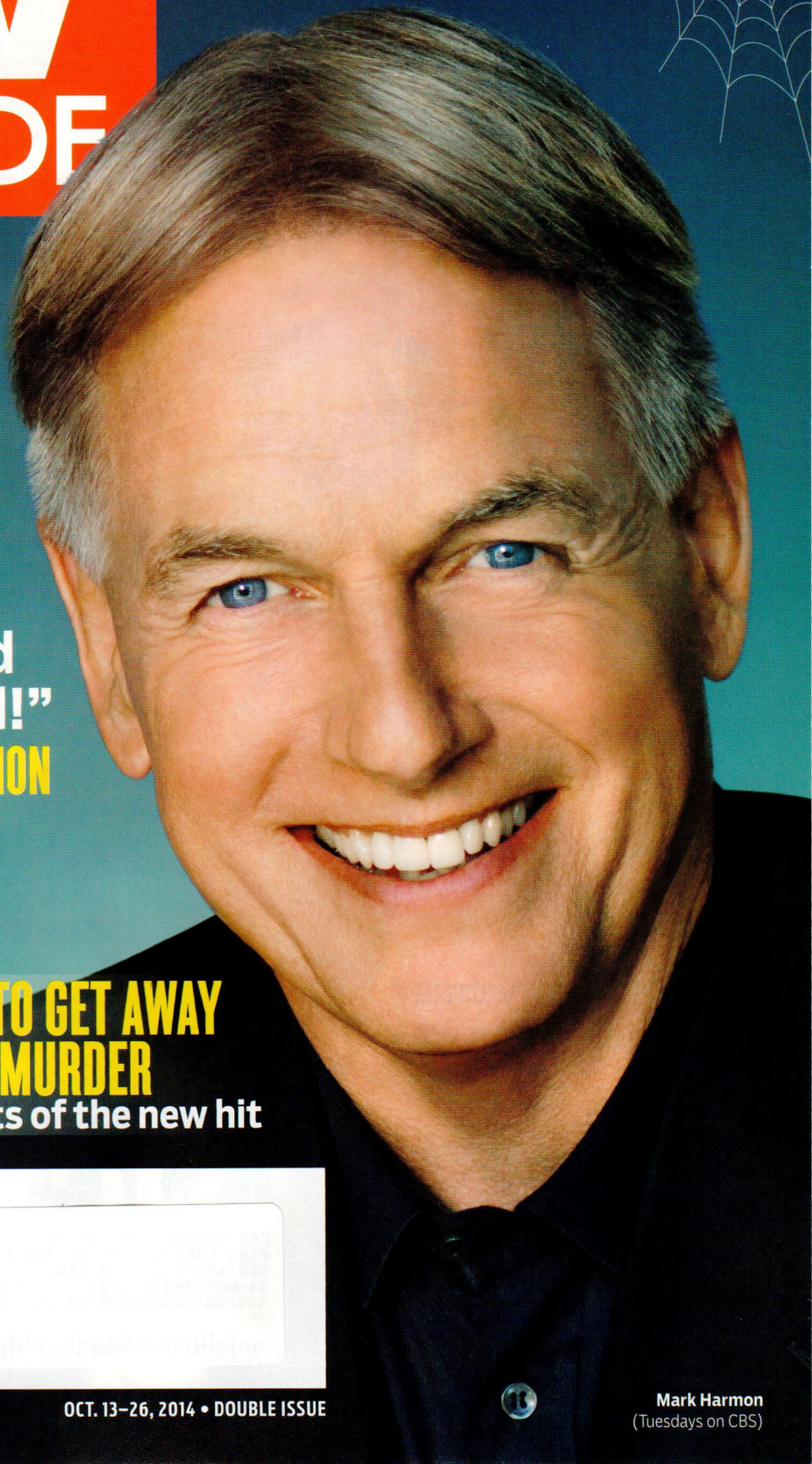
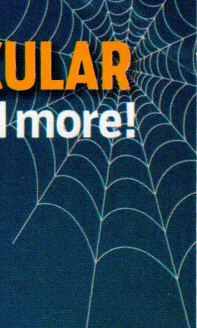


HALLOWEEN SPOOK-TACULAR
Constantine, The Middle, and more!



NCIS

**“We’re 12
years in and
still excited!”**

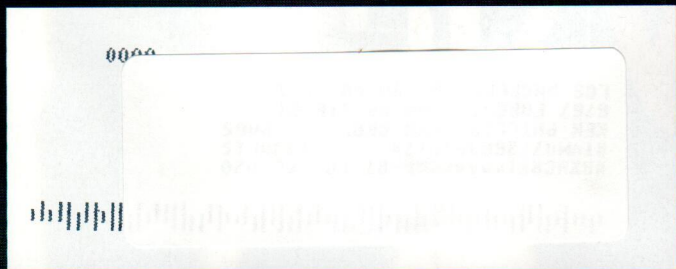
—MARK HARMON



PLUS!

HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER

Secrets of the new hit



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The gang's all here! *NCIS's* Rocky Carroll, Pauley Perrette, David McCallum, Brian Dietzen, Mark Harmon, Emily Wickersham, Michael Weatherly, and Sean Murray.

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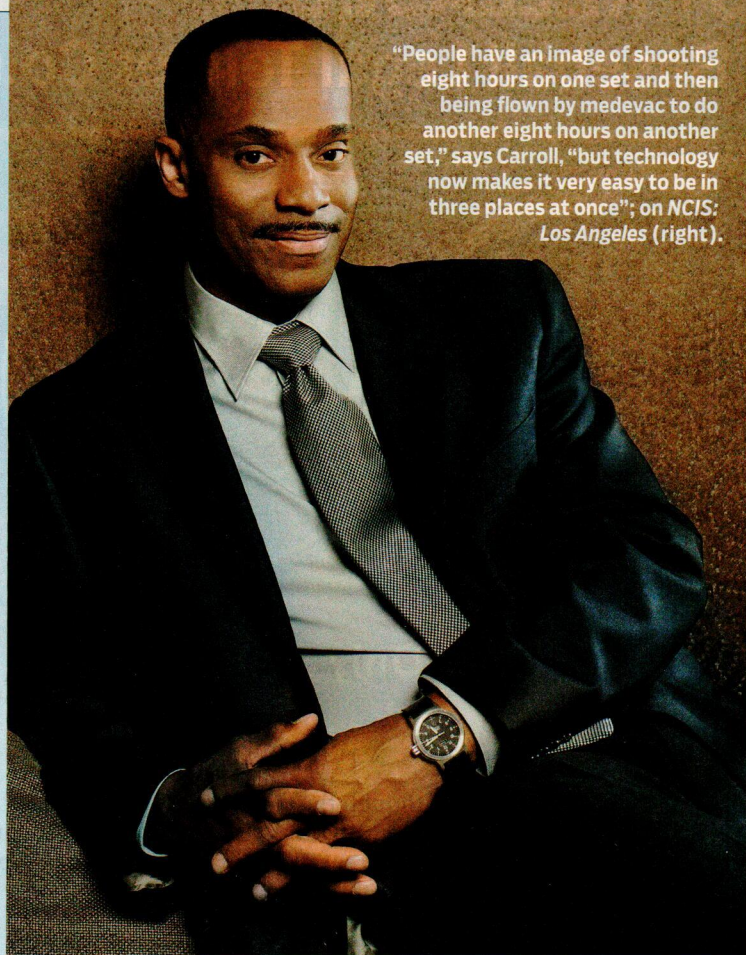
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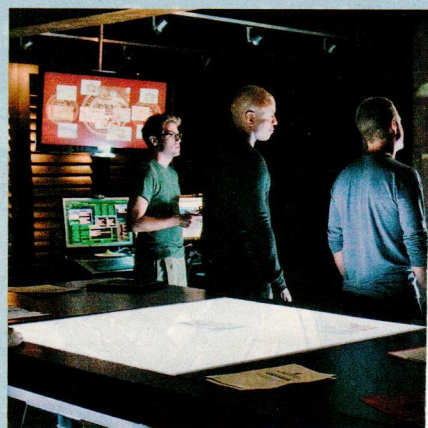
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ON THE COVER Mark Harmon photographed by Kevin Lynch in Los Angeles on September 18, 2014. Hair: Carla Dean; grooming: Joe Hailey; styling: Greg Pena. Newsstand cover insets, from top: JSquared/The CW; Sonja Flemming/CBS; Craig Sjodin/ABC.



"People have an image of shooting eight hours on one set and then being flown by medevac to do another eight hours on another set," says Carroll, "but technology now makes it very easy to be in three places at once"; on *NCIS: Los Angeles* (right).



Carroll, Leo G., similarly gave marching orders—as Alexander Waverly—to both the *Man* and *Girl From U.N.C.L.E.*) As for whether one character has ever appeared on three series simultaneously, Carroll says, "I'm not thumping my chest to proclaim I'm the first, because whenever you assume that you're setting a precedent, somebody tells you that this was done in 1947 with *The Jack Benny Show* or something." Indeed, there are a few far-flung previous examples, with Frank Cady goofing off concurrently on *Green Acres*, *Petticoat Junction*, and *The Beverly Hillbillies*, and Fred Dalton Thompson doing his DA bit on three different *Law & Orders* at once. Richard Belzer holds a record for playing the same detective on nine shows, but some of those appearances were one-off guest shots.

Gary Glasberg, the showrunner of both the original *NCIS* and *New Orleans*, is ready with at least one claim for a TV first: "It's my understanding that Rocky was the first person to be on three different series and film the scenes on the same day," he says with a laugh. "That was truly Rocky Carroll Day in the *NCIS* world."

Viewers can expect any personal, non-administrative scenes to stay on the flagship show. "The Vance/Gibbs [Mark Harmon] relationship has really morphed," Carroll says, "and even though they can have different approaches to solving problems, now they both share the experience of losing a wife. It doesn't

"We don't have to pull a rabbit out of our hats to come up with a reason for the director to appear in any of these other entities," says Carroll (with Harmon).

ROCKY CARROLL

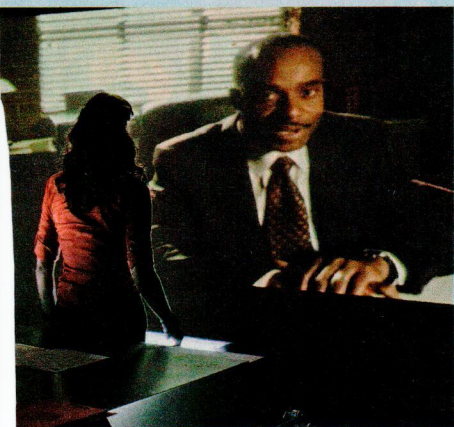
NCIS'S NEW TRIPLE THREAT

ROCKY CARROLL RECALLS the moment a fellow *NCIS* cast member tipped him off to the fact that he was about to get a lot of work. "I remember it like it was yesterday, when they told the cast that there was going to be this spinoff, *NCIS: Los Angeles*," he says, "and Pauley Perrette turned to me and said, 'You're going to be on two shows.' And I was like, 'How do you know?' She goes, 'No matter how many spinoffs they make, there's only one director [of the agency]: I thought to

myself, 'Yeah, right.' But she knew what she was talking about."

And now, with this fall's new *NCIS: New Orleans*, Carroll's Director Leon Vance will be appearing in triplicate. Triple the intimidating stare-downs! Triple the authoritarian glowering!

"When *NCIS: L.A.* first came into being, the historic reference we had was Oscar Goldman [Richard Anderson], the character who was the brain trust behind *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Bionic Woman*," Carroll says. (An unrelated

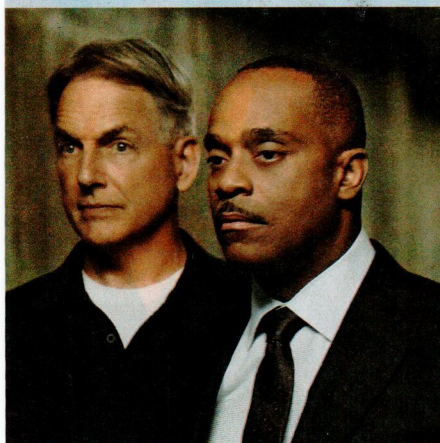


make them any more warm and fuzzy with each other. But the writers and the producers are taking great care in crafting a backstory that links these characters more than just boss and agent.”

Vance was introduced in Season 5 of *NCIS* as an ambiguous, hero-or-villain adversary. Once his virtue was finally established, he could have become what Carroll calls “a stock boss, the guy who comes in, barks orders, and walks out.” But the actor credits the writers “for creating a guy who is truly immersed in the emotional content of this series.” That’s likely to pick up later in Season 12 with a return to the scenario that previously had the uneasy widower hiring a caregiver for his kids.

One thing viewers aren’t likely to see anytime soon is overt evidence of the comedic chops Carroll got to show on series like *Roc*. He has his own idea for a crossover that could solve that: “If I had my way, I’d find a way for Vance to be friends with Sheldon on *The Big Bang Theory*. I pitched that, but nobody’s responded yet.” —CW

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ART STREIBER/CBS; SONIA FLEMING/CBS; MICHAEL YARISH/CBS



NCIS’s long run as the seemingly most stable set in Hollywood saw some bumps in 2013 when Cote de Pablo left the show on the eve of production, throwing a whole run

“This season feels more organic, because the decks are cleared and the writers know where they’re headed.” —HARMON

of planned storylines into disarray. “Last year we went through a bunch of things in nobody’s control,” Harmon says obliquely. “We had a plan up front and then that plan changed rapidly, so the fact that these writers were able to pull together the season the way they did was a real feat. They worked their asses off.

“This season feels, in some ways, more organic,” he continues, “because the decks are cleared and they know where they’re headed”—with a full complement of stand-alone episodes occasionally being drawn together by an arc involving the Russian villain first caught (and fumbled) in the season premiere.

Others might have followed up a season of panicked Ziva-lessness by lightening their stress loads a little, yet Harmon and Glasberg ensured there would be no coasting by introducing a second spinoff, *NCIS: New Orleans*. Although no one would doubt it’s primarily creator Glasberg’s baby, you can catch Harmon being uncharacteristically willing to own up to just how involved he’s been in the new series, from casting to reviewing dailies to even weighing in on decisions about the music. The two agreed that the new series should be filmed on location and have a coshowrunner (Jeffrey Lieber) out in New Orleans, but the writers would remain on the *NCIS* lot in California, so scripts wouldn’t be hammered out via Skype.

Harmon has had no real involvement with the other spinoff, *NCIS: Los Angeles*, and initial fan hopes for significant character crossover didn’t amount to much after a much-hyped Season 1 appearance by Pauley Perrette. With *New Orleans*, though, more *NCIS* stars are putting in cameos than not. “It’s a personal choice,” emphasizes Harmon. “Each actor, that’s their choice. If they can’t, fine, and if they want to, great. Obviously, we have [recurring actors like] Diane Neal and Joe Spano who have come through here and could be a part of [*NCIS: New Orleans*] for case-driven reasons. Pauley’s character”—forensic scientist and Louisiana State University graduate Abby Sciuto—“certainly has a draw there based on where her character is from.” The *NCIS* stalwart most likely to regularly cross the 9pm divide onto the new series is Rocky Carroll, who will also be coming back to the Los Angeles edition of the franchise for the first time in three years (see story on opposite page).

Harmon is too much the TV veteran to make it sound as though *NCIS: New Orleans* is even guaranteed survival, let alone smash-hit status. “Gary and I will both be glad when it airs,” he says shortly before the series premiere, “and we’ll see if it’s received, and we’ll see how people are liking it or not.” (Turns out the show had the fall’s most-watched new series debut, with 17 million viewers that night, suggesting that the want-to-like factor, at least, is astronomical.) As an executive producer, Harmon used lessons from *NCIS*’s messier early years to figure out how he wanted to ease *New Orleans* into its run. “The start of [this show] was very different from the start of [*NCIS*],” the actor says. “They’re fortunate to have had this footprint.” But with *NCIS* strolling into its 12th season with 18 million viewers, what rookie series wouldn’t want to walk a mile in its moccasins?

NCIS, Tuesdays, 8/7c, CBS