

# **An Interview with Linda Campanelli (1997)**

**by Linda S. Barth**

***Quick -- think of some of your favorite moments from Beauty and the Beast, and what comes immediately to mind? That look on Vincent's face as he is about to cross the threshold to Catherine's apartment on the evening of their second anniversary...their shared pleasure and pain as they prepare a beautiful bed chamber for Kanin and Olivia... Vincent's rescue of Catherine from near drowning and her whispered words to him -- "I love you"...a desperate, passionate embrace on the balcony..."Hold me tighter -- tighter!"...***

***We have Linda Campanelli to thank for these wonderful scenes -- moments which capture to perfection the romantic essence of the show and the relationship we so love. It was her writing expertise, courage of conviction, and passionate spirit that often brought us the B&B we love best.***

***Now it's our pleasure to invite you to get to know Linda in a fascinating interview full of shared memories from her days at Beauty and the Beast, reflections on the art and craft of writing for television, and personal moments from her private life.***

***After almost ten years, Beauty and the Beast continues to thrive in many ways. Please tell us how you feel about that.***

I think it's wonderful! It's a perfect example of how television, when done well, can open our minds and hearts, and in some cases, even change our lives for the better.

***Will you tell us about some of your convention experiences and how you've grown in understanding of the B&B fans?***

I've been to four conventions: Denver, New York, Baltimore, and Norfolk. Each one holds its own special memories for me. There were obviously quite a few years between the first three and Norfolk. I admit having to do a quick brush-up on the show and my scripts! But I have to say I was amazed at how welcome I was made to feel the second I walked into that hotel lobby, it was as if no time had passed at all.

Norfolk was special to me for a few reasons; first of all, the convention brought back some wonderful memories. We all know there were some rough times towards the end of the show, but being there with everyone, watching the music video, really reminded me of all the positives and of how lucky I am to have been involved with Beauty and the Beast. Then, of course, I simply had a blast! I thought I'd put in my appearances, then sneak off and rent a car to do some sightseeing, but I never ventured farther than the food court next door until that last Sunday

afternoon when Caitlin and I went to Jamestown. Which brings me to the other reason Norfolk will always be special to me -- Caitlin. She has become one of the dearest, most important people in my life, and I thank my lucky stars that we were invited to the same convention.

As far as my understanding of the B&B fans? I've come to understand that the show brought together a group of people who shared something in common, and that shared love became the catalyst for many, many wonderful friendships.

### ***How did you start working on Beauty and the Beast?***

I happened to catch an episode completely by chance -- China Moon. I can tell you the exact moment that hooked me. When Vincent was about to go off and fight the Ninja gang, Catherine stopped him and said, "Come back to me." That was it -- I was a goner! I'm an absolute sucker for those moments. I made Shelly watch the following week, she loved the show, too, and we became regular viewers.

We had been writing for Days of Our Lives for a couple of years and decided it was time for a change. The writers were on strike in L.A., which meant we were on an unscheduled vacation. We decided to use the time to write a B&B spec script. Our agent sent it off to the show, George read it, liked it, and called us in to "pitch" ideas to the gang. The "gang" at that particular meeting included Alex, Howard, and George. They singled out a couple of our ideas and asked us to come back in a week or so after we'd worked out a few more of the details. We did, they decided they liked A Gentle Rain -- which wasn't called that yet -- so we went home to party and start work!

Later that day I got a call from George -- and I know I've told this story before, so try not to nod off -- he wanted to tell us that they'd decided to invite us to join the staff of the show, but I could only hear every other word because my daughter, who was around two and a half at the time, had just fallen down and was crying on my shoulder. Finally, thoroughly embarrassed, I asked him to call Shelly. He did -- she called me screaming -- I screamed -- Jae was probably still screaming -- as far as we were concerned, we'd won the lottery!

### ***It's a great story -- and it's impossible to nod off when hearing how you've actually done the things we amateur writers dream of! Once you actually started working at Beauty and the Beast, what were your initial impressions of being part of the staff?***

About the people? Everyone was very nice, the writers, Ron, the secretaries and assistants, everyone...of course, we were so thrilled to be there, they probably could have thrown spitballs at us and we would have said, "Thank you." I remember sitting around the conference table at lunch that first day with Ron, George, Alex, Howard, P.K., listening to everyone talk about the show, and the characters, and realizing how much we had to learn about Vincent's character -- you know, what he would do, what he wouldn't do. Shelly and I weren't even aware at that time that he hadn't -- or wouldn't -- enter Catherine's apartment. Of course, that quickly became our unspoken goal! I was very glad we'd kept our mouths closed about our idea of Vincent beebopping to Golden Oldies with Catherine in her living room! Just kidding.

I just remembered another realization from that first lunchtime. We were watching dailies of God Bless the Child. Remember how Lena tries to seduce Vincent a couple days after giving birth? I couldn't believe it. Then, to add insult to injury, when Vincent turns her down, she takes off and immediately returns to her life of prostitution. I couldn't stand it and -- typically -- couldn't keep my mouth shut about it either. I mentioned how unrealistic the whole scenario was. I was the

only one in the room who'd actually had babies, but everyone -- except for Shelly -- disagreed with me and said it wasn't a big deal and that our viewers wouldn't be bothered by the time frame. The problem could have been easily corrected by changing the mistake in looping during post-production. So along with the very, very good, that was a rather negative impression to be left with on that first day.

***Would you tell us about some of your favorite memories from the show?***

Let's see -- playing darts in our office. You should have seen the wall -- we didn't have very good aim! Playing Nerf football across the stairwell with "the boys" -- Howard and Alex. Our daily, good-natured, snack-room romance/relationship debates with George. The first year we were on the show, the production offices weren't on the Renmar lot; they were in a nearby building a few streets over. Our office was at the top of the stairs, and casting was down the hall from us. Shelly and I always enjoyed our "view" when the casting call was for cute guys because they had to file past our office. One day I was sitting on the floor, leaning against the wall, and Shelly was across from me at the desk. She had a view of the stairs, and all of a sudden, her face just went blank. I didn't realize she was looking at a cute guy, so...and I can't say I was very discreet about it...I craned my neck around the door to see what she was looking at. There was this gorgeous guy, wearing a baseball cap, staring right back at us. I thought Shelly was going to die. He walked by, we quietly cracked up, then instantly shut up as he appeared at our door to tease us about our giggles! Well, guess what? The three of us ended up going to lunch, he started coming over to play volleyball with our gang of friends, and to this day, even though he lives back in Chicago now, Frank and I are still friends.

Okay, now this is going to sound corny, but I loved the feeling of walking through the gates at Renmar every day. I never got over the thrill of having our own office on a classic old movie lot. I loved imagining what it must have looked like back in the thirties. I wondered about all of the people who'd come and gone and worked in that very same office.

Lunchtime! Witt-Thomas had their own chef on the lot who made these great, healthy lunches that were delivered to the conference room every day. Actually, besides the food, lunchtime was fun because it was our chance to relax with everyone. We'd sit around the conference table and eat and talk and laugh -- it was nice. Oh, do you know what we watched one afternoon? Remember the Rob Lowe scandal? Well, one of the guys managed to get a copy of the tape. That was quite a lunch hour! We watched in segregated shifts, if I recall -- well, I don't actually recall, but I can't imagine watching that with the guys in the room.

As far as the show itself, I loved visiting the set. Every chance I got, I'd make the trek down to Vernon to hang around and watch. I loved watching them shoot the show, and I loved exploring the sets. There were times when everything was quiet -- they'd be shooting in a different part of the building -- and I'd roam around the tunnels, or Catherine's apartment, Vincent's chamber, Father's chamber. I'd find someplace to sit, all alone, and just take it all in. I appreciated every second of it. I remember there was this big, heavy door you'd have to go through to get from the outer area where the various production offices were into the stage area. On the other side of the door, you could either walk around one of the "sewers", or you could walk through. I walked through it every time, and I always got a kick out of it.

Watching our own scripts being filmed was really exciting. Linda and Ron were so wonderful -- always very respectful of the material. Coming from the soaps where actors are allowed to ad-lib far too much, hearing the words spoken as written was music to my ears.

As for actual moments...hmmm...I remember being there for the scene from A Gentle Rain when Vincent shows Catherine the chamber Kanin built for Olivia. I was able to see quite a bit of The Watcher being filmed. Every time I'd show up though, poor Linda was always wet and she'd shake her finger at me teasingly. I remember laughing as she gave me a look and expressed her "thanks" as she crawled into the "submerged" car trunk to do the drowning scene.

My absolute favorite memory, though, was the night Shelly and I spent at the Disney Ranch out in Santa Clarita. They were filming all of the exterior night scenes for The Watcher. We watched them sink the car, and I must admit feeling a bit empowered by that experience! Here we were, watching a perfectly good car being shoved into a lake just because Shelly and I had been in our office one day, and one of us had said, "Wouldn't it be terrible to be trapped in the trunk of a car that was filling up with water?" And there we were -- all of these people were out here in the middle of the night, in the freezing cold, with all of this equipment, about to destroy a car because we'd put it in our script! Too bad my kids don't listen to me like that -- not that I'd ask them to sink a car! Pick up their dirty clothes, yes.

Anyway, we stayed up all night with the cast and crew. It was so cold, we were all bundled up and huddled around the portable heaters, drinking hot cocoa and coffee. I was in seventh heaven. The sun was just starting to come up and it was a race against time to finish the ambulance scene with Catherine and Joe. They shot the scene and called it a wrap. Shelly and I said goodnight -- well, good morning -- to everyone. As we headed towards our car, someone on the crew started applauding. We turned around to see the whole crew clapping for us. We were dumbfounded. They said they freeze their you-know-whats off working into the wee hours of the morning all the time, but this was the very first time any of the writers or producers had ever stuck it out all night with them, and they appreciated it. So, a perfect ending to the perfect night. My best night in the business, as a matter of fact.

***Those are wonderful memories! Everyone will love reading about them. You're probably aware that some of the scenes you wrote are among the fans' all-time favorites, but what were some of your favorite scenes to write -- and why?***

Well, the scene I mentioned above, in which Vincent shows Catherine the bed chamber Kanin built as a surprise for Olivia. As usual, Linda and Ron pulled that moment off beautifully. Another one of my favorite scenes to write never made it into the final draft. In our first draft of A Gentle Rain the script opened with a hide-and-seek scene. Vincent and Catherine are playing with a bunch of the kids, and they end up ducking into a cabinet together...a not-so-large...very cramped cabinet, if you catch my drift. That was tons of fun to write. The kids know where Vincent and Catherine are, but neglect to find them on purpose, leaving them pressed up against each other in the closet for quite some time. Of course, we got carried away. The scene was practically an episode of its own, and none of the guys seemed to understand what we saw in it. Actually, that's not true. I think George and Howard liked it.

I loved writing The Watcher. There was action, and suspense, and romance -- a fun combination to write. Oh, I just remembered a scene from The Watcher that I enjoyed writing, and actually thought it was a really good scene, but it didn't make it into the final cut. Remember when Vincent is waiting for Catherine under her building? It's just after the Watcher calls her for the first time. In the original draft, Vincent is feeling very guilty about the fact that his very presence in her life has put her in danger. He infers that she would be better off if he weren't part of her life. Catherine passionately objects, telling him, in no uncertain terms, how it's her choice to have him

in her life, and how she's not going to let some lunatic ruin that for her. I know the scene that's there touches on some of that, but what we originally wrote was, in my opinion, much hotter. Linda and Ron agreed. They were disappointed with the watered-down rewrite. The first draft gave was stronger, more passionate.

I suppose, if I had to pick a favorite scene from that episode, it would be the rescue, when Catherine says, "I love you." Oh -- wait -- the last scene. Catherine knows Vincent's waiting on the balcony and she's trying to get rid of Jenny -- who finally gets the hint and leaves. Catherine races out to the balcony, slamming into Vincent's arms, burying her head in his chest. He says, "I felt you go." She says, "Hold me tighter...tighter." That's the one! And, once again, Linda and Ron did it beautifully.

As for the second half of that question -- why? Well, take a look at the theme running through a lot of those scenes I've just mentioned, and the answer's pretty clear!

***It certainly is -- and it's clear to see why we all love the two episodes you wrote for the second season! As time went by, how much freedom did you have in the development of both original and ongoing characters?***

We tried, boy did we try to get our two cents in. Well, probably more than two cents, and since it wasn't our show, that was probably not all that intelligent of us. I'm certain we drove everyone crazy with our very strong opinions. Our main battles were on Catherine's behalf. We wanted her to have a more rounded existence -- meaning friends and family above. As the show progressed, her family and friends seemed to drop like flies, or play less and less significant parts in her life.

We also wanted Catherine to push the physical part of her relationship with Vincent. We wanted her to be able to question his resistance. The outcome -- taking sponsors, networks, even audience into account -- would probably have been the same, but it sure would have been fun to turn up the heat by having Catherine press the issue a bit more. The Catherine we loved was a strong woman, and we never thought she'd simply accept the stalemate they seemed to have reached without more of a fight. "Fight" isn't the right word, but you know what I mean.

***I do know and I couldn't agree more. As for original characters, such as Kanin, were you able to have greater control over their development?***

Yes, to a certain extent. As time passed, the character of Kanin changed quite a bit, and I had to change the way I saw him. I realized no matter what character you're writing, you need to know and understand what's going on inside his head. You have to be able to see from his point of view and have compassion for him whether he's the good guy or the bad guy. The first draft of A Gentle Rain was written from a mother's point of view. Kanin was completely unsympathetic because I had no sympathy for him. We couldn't see past the fact that he was responsible for a child's death. Our mistake was pointed out to us when we received notes on the script. We completely shifted our point of view and did a complete rewrite in three days. The second draft was much better because we understood, and even liked Kanin.

***Is there a scene or episode, either one of your own or by another writer, that you feel best expresses the essence of Beauty and the Beast?***

I'll have to think about that -- scenes are flashing through my head. A scene George wrote in A

Kingdom By The Sea -- Catherine's balcony, she's tending to her rose bush, Vincent's there, she pricks her finger, Vincent kisses it. I kind of cut the heart out of it by recounting it so matter of factly, but I'm sure you all know the scene. It was wonderful. I remember the day George wrote it. We'd been relentlessly engaging him in those romance/relationship discussions for weeks on end. He wrote the scene and brought it to us and said, "Okay, here, is this what you guys are talking about? Do you like this?" We gave him big hugs!

The final scene from A Happy Life is definitely one of my favorites -- I imagine it's on quite a few top ten lists. The "These are my hands..." scene is right up there...I could go on and on.

***As you know, a very large majority of fans wish that Catherine had met a very different fate in the third season. Let's imagine Linda Hamilton had stayed with the show, and Ron Koslow had come to you at the end of the second season, saying, "Linda, I'm giving you complete control over story development for the coming season, along with an unlimited budget. Go ahead! It's all yours!" After recovering consciousness, what would you have done next?***

Okay, now you're really trying to get me into trouble! I suppose the answer depends upon the beginning of the third season. Does it remain the same? Do volcanoes erupt and roses bloom? Sorry, that was rude. For the purpose of this question, let's assume the third season didn't begin with the unconscious consummation. So, here goes, and I know this may not be a very popular answer.

I've always thought Beauty and the Beast was the perfect show for a limited run -- maybe four years if it could be stretched out that long -- the reason being the relationship. Now, if the Vincent/Catherine relationship remained static, then I suppose, in theory, the show could have gone on and on. But how satisfying would that have been? However, if the relationship progressed -- slowly, but progressed -- then I really believe another two years would have been perfect. The chances of the network censors letting too much go on between Catherine and Vincent were slim to none. However, I definitely think there were ways to give those of us who wanted more... more. So, if those last two years had been handed to me, I would have come up with a two-year arc for the relationship, and then woven stories around it. Some heavy on relationship, and some purposefully light, so as to stretch the tease out as far as possible...because most of the fun is in the tease, isn't it? And we would definitely have ended on a very happy, passionate, romantic, high note!

***That sounds perfect! Now, more than ever, I wish you had been in charge! Since then, how do you feel you've changed as a result of your experiences as a writer for Beauty and the Beast?***

I'm not sure if this answers your question, but a realization hit me in Virginia. A lesson learned, I guess, and it only took eight or nine years for me to learn it! Choose your battles. I didn't choose my battles well at Beauty and the Beast. I was too outspoken, and could have been more effective had I been a bit less passionate about some issues. While strengthening some relationships, our attitudes damaged others -- there was a more happy medium that we should have shot for. When we were watching the montage tape in Virginia, I was finally able to see past a lot of that residual anger and appreciate for the first time in a long time what Ron Koslow had created. The battles were far behind me, and this wonderful show was right there in front of me. My goodness, look what he did! All I had to do was glance around the room at all of the

people whose lives he'd touched. All I had to do was take a look in the mirror -- there I was in Virginia what -- eight, nine years after the fact -- because people were still interested -- still in love with the dream.

You know, it's funny...on the plane trip home I started writing Ron a thank you note. I wanted to tell him how much I appreciate having had the opportunity to be a part of Beauty and the Beast. I should have written and mailed the note that same day because while time thankfully makes disagreements seem less important, it also makes writing a thank you note seem less urgent.

***Can you tell us about the projects you're working on now?***

Caitlin and I are working on something together. We're very excited about it, it's very different, and we're not saying much about it just yet. So, sorry, you're just going to have to wait!

Not even a little clue? Okay, you win -- then, what was your first job in any field?

My first job was at Carl's Jr. when I was in high school. I fried those fries and charbroiled those burgers like

mad!

***When and how did you know you wanted to be a writer?***

Writing, for me, was a complete accident. I majored in TV/Film in college and one of the required courses was script writing. I wasn't that interested, so, instead of writing something original for my project, I decided to write a Rhoda script. It was my favorite show at the time, and I figured if I had to write something, I might as well have fun doing it. Well, it ended up getting quite a bit of attention from the professor, who happened to be a very successful television writer. He sent my script to an agent, and submitted it to a competition the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences was sponsoring. They were asking each college in California that had a TV/Film department to submit two scripts. Of the scripts submitted, they would choose twenty and invite the writers in for personal interviews. Of those interviewed, four or five students would receive working internships on current TV shows. I was one of the lucky students chosen to receive an internship. I requested Rhoda as the show I'd like to be placed on -- and that's where I went! After the internship ended I managed to weasel my way into another thirteen weeks on the brand new Taxi. I graduated, got a job at MTM as a secretary, made some good contacts, and met Shelly who was working at NBC where she had her own list of contacts. We wrote a spec Remington Steele, sold it, got an agent, and were off and running.

***What a great way to get started in the business! If you hadn't become a writer, what profession might you be in now?***

If it were show business-related, probably editing. But if we're talking non-show biz, then I'd have to say it would probably have something to do with architecture and/or history. I have a deep fascination with the past, and I suppose one of the few tangible links that we have to the past is architecture...old buildings. I love taking pictures of them, looking at pictures of them, exploring them, touching them. When I'm in an old building, I love to run my hand along the walls, open doors, feel the smooth wood on a banister and imagine all of the hands that have touched it. I used to love to go to Ellis Island before they restored it. They've turned it into a wonderful museum of immigration, but managed to make everything shiny and new, shooing away all of the ghosts in the process. I would have done it differently. So, my guess would be if

I hadn't become a writer, I would be doing something with vintage buildings...probably restoring them, making sure nothing is ever too new, and hanging out a "Spirits Welcome" sign.

***What type of writing do you prefer to do?***

Romantic, light dramas. Do you remember a show called Homefront a few years back? That was my kind of show. I loved everything about it -- the time period, the characters, the stories, the actors. I even wrote a Homefront script just for fun. Yes, I had my agent send it over to the show, but I knew it was written almost exclusively in-house by the husband and wife team who created the show. I didn't care though; I had such a good time writing it. I was obsessed, actually. My husband couldn't figure out why on earth I'd be so excited about writing something with little to no prospects of any cash return! It was the first script I'd written on my own since Shelly and I had split up though, so besides being a worthwhile exercise in writing, it was also valuable in the confidence-building department.

***I think all fan-fiction writers can certainly understand why you did this. So many of us have started writing because of our love for -- our obsession with -- B&B, and we're having a wonderful time with it! Looking back, what would you consider your career high?***

Beauty and the Beast, without a doubt. And to be specific? Probably that night on the set of The Watcher.

***What's a treasured comment someone has made about your work?***

I suppose, in general, it's when actors whom I respect tell me they appreciate my writing. Linda and Ron were always very supportive and generous with their praise. When I was writing General Hospital, I remember the Executive Producer's secretary calling to tell me everyone was wandering the halls cracking up, quoting lines from a scene I'd written. She said whenever one of the actors popped in to ask who'd written the day's script because they liked it, she always knew it was going to be one of mine. Writing soaps is an especially difficult, solitary, oftentimes thankless job, and it felt good to be appreciated.

***In terms of your career, how have your early dreams been realized -- or unrealized?***

That's a tough one. For as long as I can remember...I mean way back when I was maybe four years old...I wanted to be involved in the entertainment industry. I was always fascinated with the behind the scenes of TV and movie-making. So from the second I got that internship on Rhoda, my dreams began to be realized. Some were very simple...just give me access to a set and I was happy...still am, as a matter of fact! Other dreams, however, were never realized, and you know what? That's okay. I always thought I'd eventually create and run my own show. To be more specific, I thought Shelly and I would create and run OUR own show. We were on the right track, but unfortunately, the partnership didn't work out. Everything happens for a reason though, and I think certain dreams are meant to remain just that, dreams. Running a show means endless hours at the studio, incredible responsibility, and very few hours at home. Because of the way things worked out, my family remained my priority. Giving Mitch and the kids the time and attention they deserve...and receiving the time and attention I deserve from them...would have been next to impossible if I'd been at the helm of a show. My life has certainly changed since my days on Beauty and the Beast, but change can be exhilarating. Those old dreams have been replaced with new ones... very different...but every bit as exciting.



***If you could go back and talk to your twenty-year-old self, what advice would you give her?***

I have a nice life; I'm not sure I'd advise twenty-year-old me to do anything that might upset that outcome. Wait, I just thought of something -- I'd tell myself to grab Mitch and get the heck out of L.A. I've lived here all my life, I'm bored with it, and it certainly hasn't changed for the better.

Do you see any signs of your son or daughter following in your professional footsteps?

They both seem interested in the process of filmmaking, but I'm not sure if it's just idle curiosity. Jae (she's eleven now) has been bugging me since she was really little to let her get into acting, but living in L.A., every other kid wants to act, and every other kid has an agent. It practically becomes a second career for the parent who has to shuttle them from audition to audition, which I wouldn't be good at. I've worked in casting and been to auditions with friends. Sitting in those waiting areas, watching the routine those children and their mothers go through...well, it definitely isn't for me. I don't have the patience for stage moms or their kids, and the last thing I want is to have one of the latter living in my house! Nick, who's twelve and a half, has just signed up for a theatre/acting workshop for this summer. He came home all excited the other day because he'd had the opportunity to sit in on the drama class at school. They'd included him in all of the exercises they were doing and he loved it. I wouldn't mind either of them taking classes and learning the craft of acting if they're interested. I'm just not willing to jump into the fire with them at this age. I've always told Jae, when she's old enough (teens, I imagine), and if she's still interested in acting, then we'll talk about it. The truth is, though, I'm not sure I'd hope for careers in the entertainment industry for them. It can be loads of fun, but it can also be a very cold place to land.

***In your opinion, what are the best and worst shows on TV right now -- and ever?***

I watch surprisingly little television these days, so I can only judge the ones I'm familiar with. Mitch and I never miss The X Files. Actually, that's the only show we watch regularly anymore. That's hard for me to believe since I grew up being such a TV addict. We enjoy Mad About You when we remember to watch it. I catch E.R. every once in a while. I can appreciate it for its excellence, but I've just never been a huge fan of medical shows. One more show I'd have to add to the list of today's best is Rosie O'Donnell. I don't have much time to watch it, but I think her show is such fun...and fun counts as far as I'm concerned.

As for the best ever? I Love Lucy, The Mary Tyler Moore Show, St. Elsewhere, Homefront, the old Saturday Night Live, Northern Exposure before they became too impressed with themselves, M\*A\*S\*H...I know as soon as I finish this interview, I'll think of about ten more. But that's all I'm coming up with at the moment.

***What TV or movie scene last brought tears to your eyes?***

Jerry Maguire -- when he goes into the little boy's room as he's sleeping to say good-bye, and, of course, The English Patient.

***What TV show or movie are you embarrassed to say you like?***

Friends, I guess. We're probably way too old to be getting such a kick out of that show, but we usually laugh our way through it.

***If you could write for any current TV show, what would it be?***

That's difficult to answer because, as I said, I watch very little television. Early Edition is the type of show in general that I'd enjoy writing for, and, of course, a show like Homefront. Okay -- and The X-Files would be quite a challenge.

***Tell us a few facts of your life. What's your full name, and were you named for someone?***

Linda Roseann Campanelli...and, nope, I wasn't named for anyone.

When is your birthday?

November 21, 1957.

***You didn't have to tell us the year...How many brothers and sisters do you have, and what is your place in the birth order? Do you feel this had any effect on your life?***

I'm an only child. Actually, most people would probably answer a resounding yes to that last question, but I'm not sure that it had any resounding effect on me. I'll try to explain myself. My parents are wonderful people...I'm so lucky. We've always had a great relationship. The typical stereotype of an only child is the over-indulged, spoiled kid. In a way, I was both, but I think my parents managed to balance those extras with good values and tons of plain old love and attention. What occurs to me, however, is that if I'd had a brother or sister, my bet is I would have been raised exactly the same way, and we all would have received exactly the same treatment I received as an only child. Does that make sense?

***Yes, because it's such a beautiful reflection on your parents' wisdom and love. Do you have a personal hero, someone who is or has been a strong influence on you?***

So many people have influenced me and continue to influence me in so many different ways, but right now, my kids are my heroes. I'm watching them grow up in a world that is less forgiving than the world in which we grew up. Their freedoms are limited. They live in a world in which their every move is monitored because of the fear that invades our daily lives. They also live in a world in which...I believe...they will face difficulties far greater than any our generation has had to, or will ever have to face.

***I see this constantly with my students -- so much turmoil at such an early age, so much intensity in their young lives. Their memories will be very different from ours. Would you tell us about one of your favorite childhood memories?***

That's so funny...here I just told you how I had this perfect childhood, you ask me this question, and do you think one thing pops into my head? Well, I'm going to take that as a good sign because my thoughts are filled with quite a few wonderful memories right now. They're flying from memories of friends, and summers, and slumber parties, to memories of vacations and camping and hiking and my cousin Donny and I being roused from our sleeping bags in the wee

hours of the morning to hand-feed deer, to my dad teaching me how to ride a motorcycle, to my mom being the only mom who had her own roller skates, to roping my parents into starring in our stupid super-8 movies, to Christmas... Christmas was always great...to the way Halloween used to be when we were out there trick-or-treating...the streets filled with kids and no parents standing worried guard over us, to sitting quietly with my parents on a mountaintop in Yosemite.

***If you could live anywhere you've ever visited or have lived in the past, where would that be and why?***

The coast of Maine. It's so incredibly beautiful, and peaceful, and full of history. I love it. I'd want an old house with a lawn that slopes down to the water's edge and a wrap-around porch where I can sit watching the ocean...okay, so I want a lighthouse out there in the distance, too!

***If you could spend a month somewhere you've never been, where would you go and why?***

Ireland...for a couple of reasons, but they're both my secrets.

***What was your favorite story or book as a child?***

Well, this wasn't when I was very, very young -- I think maybe seventh grade -- but *A Tree Grows In Brooklyn*. I loved that book.

***So did I. I must have read it half a dozen times at that age. What was your best subject in school? Your favorite?***

I'd have to answer History to both.

***Who are some of your favorite writers?***

I love Poe, Fitzgerald, Steinbeck, E.L. Doctorow -- but I can't say I've read all of any one writer's work. I go from author to author and genre to genre. I loved *Sense and Sensibility* when I read it last summer, but I did not race to make the next book I read another Jane Austen. I don't know why I'm like that...I wish I weren't.

***Who are some of your favorite performers?***

Judy Garland, Liza Minnelli, Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Barbra Streisand, The Beatles...um...Robin Williams, Bette Midler, Annette Bening, Harrison Ford, Melissa Manchester, Bob Seger, Billy Joel, Jimmy Stewart, Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, Katherine Hepburn, and Carole Lombard to name a few!

***What book is currently on your nightstand?***

A book of Irish short stories, a pile of *Victoria Magazine* -- my favorite magazine, a book of early poems of W.B. Yeats (sounds impressive, but it's been there for months and I haven't looked at it yet), and a book called *That Camden Summer* -- a novel that takes place in Maine in the early 1900's.

***If I turned on the cassette/CD player in your car, what would I hear?***

Right this second? Renaissance music. Yesterday? Big Band -- Benny Goodman, Glen Miller, TommyDorsey.

***What do you feel is your best quality?***

Well, I think maybe it could be the fact that I'm often able to see both sides of an argument. I think I'm pretty good at being able to put myself in someone else's shoes and, even though I may disagree with that person, or something they've done, most of the time I can still understand the "why" from their point of view. While that may be my best quality, it can cause problems because seeing both sides of the issue often lands me smack- dab in the middle between people I love. Sometimes I think it would be much easier to see a clear-cut answer and land squarely on one side or the other. Oh, I also think I was given a healthy serving of patience.

***What is your worst quality?***

I'm selfish. Or maybe I'm just going through a selfish phase. I want to do what I want to do. I don't want to be told how or when or with whom, and unfortunately, Mitch and the kids are having to put up with the phase.

***What would you like to change about yourself?***

I've never been very good at standing up for myself, but I'm working on it. And my self-confidence is too easily shaken...working on that, too. I suppose that selfish streak should be addressed!

***Describe a perfect day.***

There are perfect days that I could spend all alone, perfect days with my husband, perfect days with my kids, perfect days with a friend...In general though? A day filled with peace and love and fun (quiet or raucous)...Could be at home, could be on that coast of Maine, or a secluded beach on Maui, could be at Jamestown, or the Little League field for that matter.

***What would you like your epitaph to read?***

Just resting...Be back later.

***What would we be surprised to learn about you?***

Well, I don't like peanut butter. Oh, I once had a job packing porno films at a warehouse, a job that definitely doesn't fit my goody-good image!

***Well, I'm glad you moved on to B&B! Before we end the interview, would you tell us about a favorite "Ron Perlman moment"?***

Well, here's a "missed Ron Perlman moment" and I could kick myself every time I think of it! I always thought it would be great to have a picture taken of myself with Vincent and use it for a Christmas card, but I never got around to doing it. I don't have any pictures of myself with Vincent or on the set. Oh, one moment with Ron that I loved was seeing him with the baby on

the set of God Bless the Child. That baby was so cute and it was fun watching Ron hold him. The baby was fascinated with Vincent's face.

***How about a favorite "Linda Hamilton moment"?***

She's a really nice person. This is one of my favorites -- it's not B&B-related, it was when she was doing Terminator 2. I asked Nick, if he could meet anyone, who would it be? He picked Arnold Schwarzenegger, so I called Linda and she said to bring him out to the set. They were filming in the north end of the Valley at an abandoned hospital. I didn't tell the kids where we were going -- just kept giving them hints and by the time we got there, they had figured it out. They got to watch the filming -- it was really cool. I have this great picture of Linda and the kids. Jae was a little shy around Arnold, but Nick posed with him for a wonderful shot. I have some nice memories of going to the Rose Bowl swap meet with Linda and putting Dalton in the stroller when he was tiny and walking down the street because we couldn't live without a Baskin Robbin's ice cream cone, but fulfilling Nick's fantasy is the best.

***One last question -- You haven't expressed an interest in acting, but would you have liked to have written a character for yourself to play on B&B?***

As a fantasy -- yes! In reality -- no! I can't even say lines I've written and have them sound right, even when I'm completely alone in my office, so I certainly wouldn't want to try it for an audience of millions!

**END**