



CALIFORNIA DREAMING

» After being eaten alive by a shark, actor Richard Brancatisano is now *Chasing Life*. He tells Matt Myers the secrets to his career survival.

PHOTOGRAPHY COREY NICKOLS

DNA: Congratulations on the success of [TV drama] *Chasing Life*. You've come a long way since playing Green Mystic Power Ranger and Vittorio, the Italian prince on *Home And Away*. Do you pinch yourself?

Richard Brancatisano: Yeah, because up until now working in the States has always just been in my dreams. It was a concept that I wasn't entirely sure was possible. So every now and then I find myself reflecting on the fact that it has all worked out, so far, and I feel a deep sense of gratitude and excitement.

***Chasing Life* revolves around a young female journalist diagnosed with cancer. What attracted you to the role?**

The thing I loved about the show, straight off the bat, was the writing. It was up-to-date, witty, sarcastic and the themes are relevant. I love the fact that the show's overall concept is an issue that so many people can relate to, and there are sound moral undertones. The show's values are very much in tact and it doesn't need to rely on tricks like violence or sex to get people watching.

There is an Australian character on the show played by Aussie actor Aisha Dee. Do you hang out?

Yes, it's great having another Aussie on set. She's amazing. She began on *The Saddle Club* back in Australia and now plays the main character's best friend, Beth.

In the 2012 shark movie *Bait* you were brutally eaten in the first five minutes. That must have been an unusual role to film!

Yes, I was in a tank of water and in that opening shot where my dismembered body comes crashing down, I had to sink myself by carefully breathing out air and falling towards the camera. We did it about a thousand times to get it right, and I had to wear a half green suit so they could cut half my body off in post production! At times I had people underneath me in scuba gear pulling me under the water and it was all filmed in 3D! It was really quite amazing. It actually motivated me to watch

Jaws, which I'd never seen before. What a great movie! And it was the perfect research.

You used to share a house with three gay guys in Darlinghurst, Sydney. Are you doing something similar in West Hollywood?

[Laughs] Not exactly, but I live just above West Hollywood which you might say is similar to Sydney's Darlinghurst. It's very gay-friendly and always has a great vibe. Actually, I recently ran into my old housemate Craig, who lived in the Darlo house. In fact I think he introduced me to you all those years ago for my first Straight Mate interview.

Indeed he did! Last time we did the interview you said if you were gay, you'd go for Sylvester Stallone. Has that changed?

Hmm... how about I take it up a little and go for Michael Hutchence? He's the ultimate front man for me. Always so natural on stage; had a great balance of masculine and feminine qualities and, most importantly, he had great hair!

Are your divas still Britney Spears and the Pussycat Dolls? Lana Del Ray and Lorde are pretty cool, but I also love Kate Bush. I think the guitar solo in *Wuthering Heights* might be my all-time favourite. That album, *The Kick Inside*, was also right on the cusp of recordings moving from tape to digital so the analog

the highlight of my day. Her music is my drug! **While working in the States, have you come across people where you've thought wow, I can't believe I'm working with them?** Yeah, all the time. For instance at the table read for *Chasing Life*. Scott Michael Foster, who plays the other fellow in the show's love triangle, sat down next to me and I felt like I already knew him. Then it hit me that I'd seen him on *Californication*. The same happened when Sam Anderson from *Lost* was in one of the episodes. It's a real blast working with people who you have watched countless times on shows that really meant something to you. It also introduces a whole new perspective on what you thought was possible.

Are there any particular actors who have inspired you? Bradley Cooper and Ryan Gosling are two guys that I've watched a lot and love the way they connect. I feel like they've taken acting to the next level of realism and creativity. I'm always excited to watch whatever they're in because there's something about them that is so connected and real.

You've also recently finished work on a movie. Yes, it's called *Alex And Eve*. It's a kind of a *Romeo And Juliet* story about two lovers. One family is Greek Orthodox and the other is

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sound was really hitting its stride. It sounds so warm and phat. I actually use her *Aerial* album for my alarm. I love those birds chirping. ***Wuthering Heights* is so iconic and she's recently had a series of successful comeback concerts.** I know! I wish I could have gone to see her. Actually it was Aussie actress Georgina Haig [*The Sapphires*] who introduced me to *Wuthering Heights*. She showed me the song and did the whole dance routine and I was so amazed by her performance that I downloaded it off iTunes that very night. I thought it was fucking amazing! After that I downloaded everything of Kate Bush. But I guess my real diva at the moment is my girlfriend Erin Marshall. She's a singer/songwriter and every time she writes a song she sends it to me and it's

Lebanese Muslim. I play Greek Alex and Andrea Demetriades, from *Crownies*, plays Eve. It's a comedy that addresses racial undertones and issues of assimilation, acceptance and tolerance. It looks at religion and sees both the good and bad. It's all about finding a balanced approach. **What's the best piece of advice you can offer to aspiring actors out there?** Have your priorities straight so you don't take setbacks to heart. Some people give up because it hurts too much, and when they don't get a job it emotionally scars them. I try to not let disappointments scratch me too much. I count my blessings!

More: *Chasing Life* screens 8.30pm Mondays on Fox8.