

## TELEVISION

# Sedgwick Heats Up Summer Primetime

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It's safe to say that the summer months usually bring a dry-spell to the whirlwind of fascinating television that we've become accustomed to during the regular season. Nothing is further from the truth this year, as TNT's *The Closer* has proven with its excellent ratings, an early pick-up for season two, and continuously bold, exciting, and realistic stories that leave its viewers reeling.

*The Closer* stars Kyra Sedgwick as Deputy Police Chief Brenda Johnson, one of the country's leading investigators. With an offbeat personality and a tough-as-nails approach to her cases, Sedgwick's Brenda is a titillating cross between Tony Shalhoub's Monk (*Monk*), and Marg Helgenberger's Catherine Willows (*CSI*). The creative team behind *The Closer* is the same talented team behind both *Nip/Tuck* and *The Agency*. And *The Closer's* story gets better – Gil Garcetti, former Los Angeles district attorney who served during the OJ Simpson investigation and trial, is a consulting producer on the series. Garcetti brings a unique realism to the crime investigation portion of the show.

*The Closer* marks Kyra Sedgwick's first leading role in a dramatic series. She received critical raves last year for performances in such projects as *The Woodsman* (in which she starred opposite husband Kevin Bacon), *Cavedweller*, and *Something the Lord Made*. She recently wrapped up production on *Loverboy*, which she co-produced. In 2002 she earned a Dramatic Film Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival for *Remember Me*.



Photo Courtesy Andrew Eccles

**Kyra Sedgwick stars as Deputy Police Chief Brenda Johnson, a native of Atlanta who's thrust into Los Angeles to assist the district attorney in TNT's new hit series *The Closer*.**

**How do you think viewers relate to Brenda and the conflicts she faces?**

She has food issues, and who doesn't right now in America? Being a female I have food issues, so I will definitely put myself on that list. I think they relate very much to a woman struggling in a man's world, because ultimately we're all struggling in a man's world – every woman. I think we all struggle with being strong and then sometimes pay the conse-

clude *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Mr. & Mrs. Bridge*, *Singles*, *Phenomenon*, *Behind the Red Door*, *Just a Kiss*, and *Secondhand Lions*, as well as *Something to Talk About* and *Miss Rose White*, both of which earned her Golden Globe nominations.

Sedgwick proved herself to be a friendlier, more down-to-earth version of Brenda when she spoke with **The Record** about her latest hit.

**You've done a lot of work with film. Was it difficult to make a transition to the lead in a television series?**

No, I mean I've always done television along the way [*Miss Rose White*, *Door to Door*, *Something the Lord Made*]. I had my own sitcom for two seconds that got cancelled. I've always been happy to do television if it was good. What kept me away from doing any kind of series, especially an hour-long series, is the fact that it's just too much time. To do a 23 episode show is nine months out of your life, it's an insane schedule, and how can you possibly make all 23 good? This was different because it was only 12 episodes.

**How did you and everyone else involved with *The Closer* make each episode as 'good' as the last?**

It's for cable, so you get to do more, there's less commercials, less of a demographic, less of the standards and practices that you have to deal with. So for me,

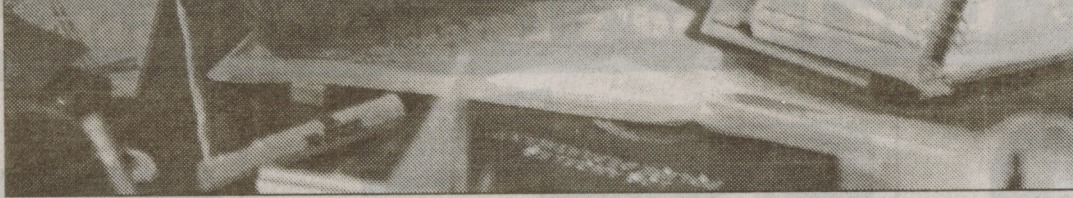


Photo Courtesy Richard Cartwright

I feel like I'm making 12 little movies! (*laughs*) I feel like the scripts are really on top of that. The writing is phenomenal and the cast members are great. The schedule is fast so it's kind of like making a low budget movie. For me it's not that different except that I'm the lead in every show, which is great! And I love that! We can take the character anywhere. Brenda can be Lucille Ball, Al Pacino, Robert DeNiro, a big action hero ... she can even be Spiderman. She's fantastic, a great character to play. She can be incredibly strong and incredibly fragile in a span of three minutes. That's very exciting for me. That's why I do what I do, I try to be human. I think human beings are fascinating. They're capable of great cruelty and great beauty.

**What makes Brenda a "closer"?**

She's called *The Closer* because she closes the case and her expertise is that she has the ability to draw confessions out of people. It doesn't always happen exactly the way one would expect, but she'll always know who committed the crime. For her, it's about getting the person to admit they've done what they've done - what

she knows that they've done.

**Which aspects of your own personality and character do you bring to Brenda?**

I find her very multi-faceted and contradictory, and I would say that about a lot of people, including myself. She's strong, she's very fragile, and she's good at her job. But she does have a lot of self-doubt. She's smarter than I am, so that's not like me! She's very savvy about people, which I definitely think I am. I get a real good sense of what's going on with people. I can really get into their skin. Most of the time I'm right ... well, not too often of course... (*laughs*) I can often see their story pretty quickly. I'm good at getting people to talk about themselves. I'm a good listener, so people like to talk to me. She's a bad dresser - I'm not ... At least I try not to be! She's very much a fish out of water in Los Angeles [Brenda is from Atlanta], and I am too, being a diehard Easterner. I'm only in LA for the show, but sometimes I just scratch my head and go, "God this place is just like Rome!" I mean it's just so different, it might as well be in China or something. I'm from Manhattan.

woman a brein. In some ways we've almost come nowhere since the '50s. Women are still supposed to be demure and quiet, defer to men, and to look unbelievably, unrealistically hot every second and still be able to do their jobs and have children. It's like an impossible task for all of us. I'm hoping that people will really see themselves in Brenda. And that in-

cludes men. She's someone who's real and makes mistakes and struggles, but who is also really interesting and exciting to watch. So much of the reason why I took this job was that I was fascinated with her character, as well some of the others on the show.

**Because of her southern origins, Brenda has a sweet accent, almost that of a belle. How did you perfect the drawl?**

It's a lot of work and I stay on top of it. At least I hope I am staying on top of it. I do a lot of work on it with a dialect coach. It's a very disarming side to her personality and it's just great. Sometimes I find myself doing it when I'm not in character, but I drive my kids insane and they want to kill me, so I have to stop!

**What makes *The Closer* unique to all other detective and/or criminal shows?**

Me!

*The Closer* airs on Mondays at 9 p.m. on TNT.