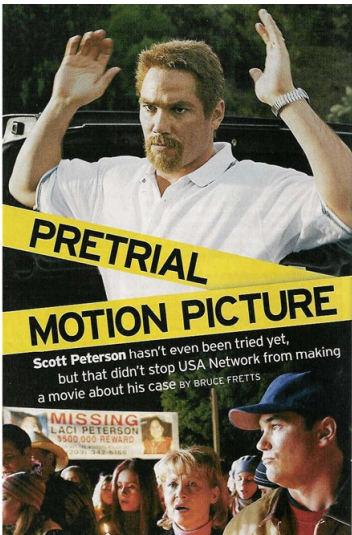


# TV Guide

3 janvier 2004/ January 3th, 2004





**DEAN CAIN HAS** just arrived for lunch at a Santa Monica restaurant when he's recognized by a passerby. "Hey, aren't you Superman?"

The 31-year-old Clark veteran graciously acknowledges his former not-so-secret identity. Suddenly, it hits him: "Is somebody going to stop me and go, 'Hey, aren't you Scott Peterson?'" and smack me in the mouth?"

Maybe Cain should have thought of that before he agreed to play the real-life man who's charged with murdering his pregnant wife, Laci, in *The Perfect Husband: The Laci Peterson Story*, airing February 13 on USA Network. Turning a real-life tragedy into a piece of entertainment would be sticking it if it didn't feel so inevitable. "This is the natural result of a media train that left the station with Scott Peterson talking, talking, talking on TV," says Court TV anchor Nancy Grace. "His behavioral evidence has fueled speculation, analysis and, ultimately, a TV movie."

**WAIT A MINUTE, THE GUY HASN'T EVEN** been tried yet! How can they turn his story into a movie? Narrowly. The script covers only the events between Laci's Christmas Eve 2002 disappearance and Scott's arrest last April. Any subsequent developments that might occur before the film airs will be covered in an end-title card. Says Cain, "No matter what happens—even if it turns out that he's guilty or had an accomplice—that won't change what we've done."

Seen through the eyes of the Petersons' "best friends" (composites played by David Dornan and Sarah Joy Brown), the telepic attempts to bring drama from their weakening belief in Scott's innocence. Initially supportive, they turn against him once he

becomes a murder suspect, a media target and an admitted adulterer after he confesses to an affair with Amber Frey (Tracy Lynn Mikkelsen). "The story is really about how trust can be crushed," Cain says.

Limiting the time line reduces Laci's role to a cameo. Meredith Liebow, who plays the part, doesn't even speak any lines. "She's more a body double than an actress," says executive producer Diane Sokolow, who describes one of Laci's few appearances: "There's a moment—and it may or may not end up in the film—where Laci's dad walks in her house and thinks he sees her."

**MAKING A MOVIE OUT OF AN ONGOING** news story proved a surreal experience all around. "While we were shooting, I'd watch the preliminary hearings when I'd go home at night," Cain says. "It was very strange." And not without pitfalls: When Frey contradicted earlier reports by testifying in the pretrial phase that she'd had no face-to-face contact with Scott after Laci vanished, a scene between Cain and Mikkelsen had to be reshoot as a phone conversation.

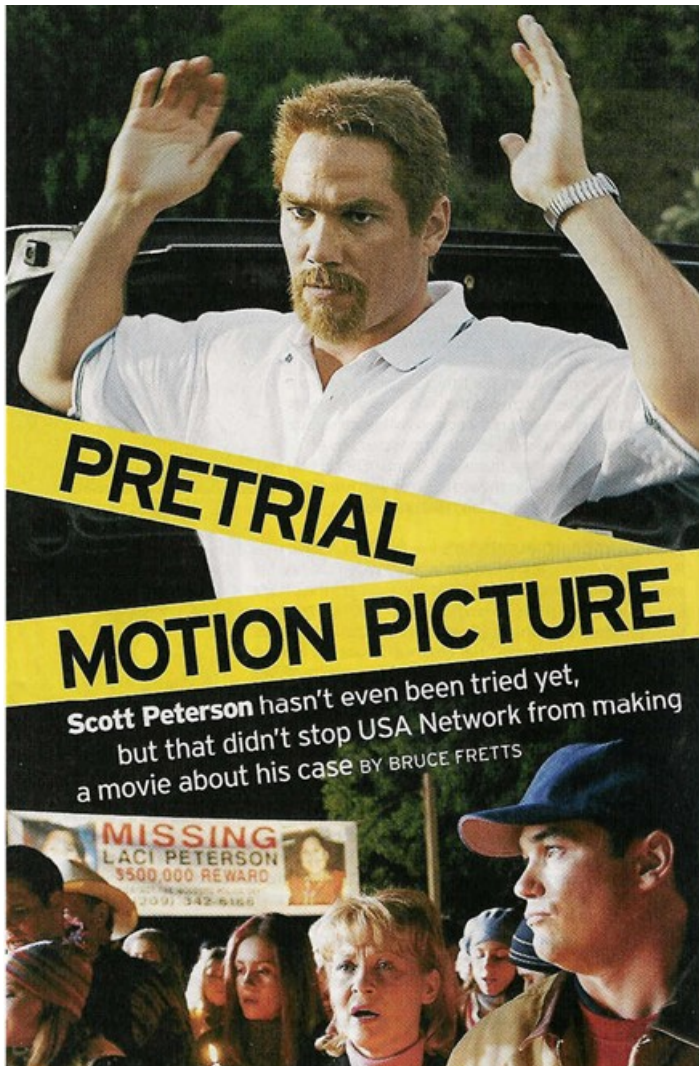
The filmmakers claim to be unconcerned about landing the potential jury pool. "Our little movie is a grain of sand on the beach compared to the nonstop coverage of CNN and MSNBC," says USA Network executive vice president Jeff Wachtel.

Grace, who's also analyzed the case on CNN's *Larry King Live*, thinks the movie's effect on jury selection will be greater: "You'll have to ensure which jurors have seen it and what impact it had on them. Sometimes, frankly, even the most honest juror doesn't know the impact."

Cain remains unfazed. "I didn't play him as guilty, but I didn't play him as innocent of everything, either. My hope is that at the end, you're not quite sure whether he did it." Who does Cain think did it? "I have no opinion whatsoever, and that's not just the company line," he argues. "Hell, if I had any real idea, I'd be on CNN!"

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## PRETRIAL MOTION PICTURE

**Scott Peterson hasn't even been tried yet, but that didn't stop USA Network from making a movie about his case.**

BY BRUCE FRETTS

Dean Cain has just arrived for lunch at a Santa Monica restaurant when he's recognised by a passerby, "Hey, aren't you Superman ?"

The Lois & Clark veteran graciously acknowledges his former not-so-secret identity. Suddenly, it hits him : "Is somebody going to stop me and go,"Hey, aren't you Scott Peterson ? and smack me in the mouth ?"

Maybe Cain should have thought of that before he agreed to play the real-life man who's charged with murdering his pregnant wife, Laci, in *The Perfect Husband : The Laci Peterson Story*, airing February 13 on USA Network. Turning a real-life tragedy into a piece of insta-tainment would be shocking if it didn't feel so inevitable. "This is the natural result of a media train that left the station with Scott Peterson talking, talking, talking on TV," says Court TV anchor Nancy Grace. "His behavioral evidence has fueled speculation, analysis and, ultimately, a TV movie."

Wait a minute, the guy hasn't even been tried yet ! How can they turn his story into a movie ? Narrowly. The script covers only the events between Laci's Christmas Eve 2002 disappearance and Scott's arrest last April. Any subsequent developments that might occur before the film airs will be covered in an end-title card. Says Cain, "No matter what happens - even if it turns out that he's guilty or had an accomplice, that won't change what we've done."

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Making a movie out of an ongoing news story proved a surreal experience all around. "While we were shooting, I'd watch the preliminary hearings when I'd go home at night," Cain says. "It was really strange." And not without pitfalls. When Frey contradicted earlier reports by testifying in the pretrial phase that she's had no face-to-face contact with Scott after Laci vanished, a scene between Cain and Middelndorf had to be reshot as a phone conversation.

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