

On The Run

I AM LEGEND

Emmy-winner **Joe Morton** is more than the sum of his *Scandal* character Roland Pope. He has *more* than 70 films to his credit, starred in TNT's *Proof* this past summer and has a Dick Gregory play coming to the Apollo.

Scandal ended with Roland's daughter Olivia putting him in prison. Does he love Olivia?

Oh, of course he does. They don't necessarily see eye to eye on many things, but certainly he does what he does because he loves her. To think about it any other way would be crazy. He feels that he has two obligations in the world—one is to protect the republic, the other is to protect his daughter. And sometimes those two things come into conflict especially when Fitz is involved.

Congrats on your TNT summer series *Proof*.

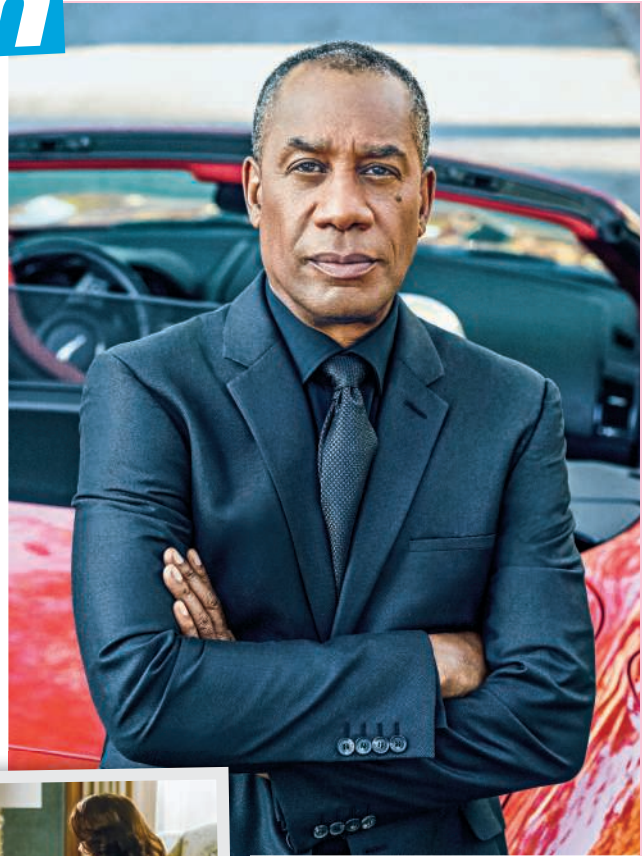
Ah, thank you. It's a really beautiful series. It's certainly unlike anything I've worked on before. It's about a scientist and an entrepreneur played by Matthew Modine and Jennifer Beals who are trying to get proof of life after death...based on the idea that she's just lost her son, and she's had a near death experience herself, which makes it all very real.

What are your thoughts on reincarnation?

I'm not sure about reincarnation, but as far as life after death is concerned, the way I view it is it doesn't really matter one way or the other. The life that matters is the life that you're living. If the life that you're living is a good one and a positive one and a life-affirming one, if there's life after death that's icing on the cake and if there isn't, you haven't lost anything.

Tell me about your work on the Dick Gregory play *Turn Me Loose*, which is about the comedian and activist's life.

Yes, we've been working on that for the last, oh, at least year and a half. It looks like we're going to do it next spring in May in New York at the Apollo... We did a reading in Los Angeles too. We've done a few. But this was the first time where the majority of the audience was Black and it made a huge difference in terms of



the impact of the play. One is just simply because Black people have the tendency to talk back to the performer, which is just great. It just lifted me and the play.

You tweeted: "I don't hate. Hate is debilitating. It eats away at your soul. Before you know it, it has consumed you." But there must've been a time in your life when you felt it.

I can almost see it vividly. I was a young actor in New York City and one of the battles that young Black actors fought all the time was catching a cab just to get to and from the theater. And it used to just drive me crazy when you'd stand in the middle of the street, put your hand out and the yellow cabs would go by and they're all lit up and they'd take a passenger half a block up. I remember one day standing in the middle of the street, just slamming cabs with my fist as they went by because it just made me so angry. Until I realized I just couldn't do that anymore. I'd also come from a background where my father's job, when he was alive, was to integrate the armed forces overseas. So racial prejudice was something I'd dealt with since I was a little kid and I think I had to go through all of the hatred from my end of it, until I came to a place where I realized it was not benefitting me, nor anyone around me.

—PAULA T. RENFROE