

'iZombie' Interview: Malcolm Goodwin talks season 2 shake-up

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You know that show about zombies that everyone is raving about? No, not the one with the sheriff and his one-eyed son... I'm talking about the one on The CW that follows Liv Moore (Rose McIver), an undead heroine that fights crime by eating the fresh brains of victims and getting visions of their deaths. Now, I know, this seems like an unlikely premise—but trust me, *iZombie* is a supernatural hit and you're going to want to be tuning in each

week. As you would expect, life as a zombie isn't a walk in the park— things never go smoothly and in the afterlife, there are way more complications than you'd ever imagine. But, this is a sharp-witted comedy after all, and *Veronica Mars* creator Rob Thomas sure does deliver. We're already in season two of *iZombie*, and we're about to tie up some loose ends: like the Meat Cute massacre, the reveal of the Chaos Killer, oh and finally bringing Liv's partner Clive Babineaux into the zombie fold...

In this reality, what could be worse than being turned into a zombie? I mean, besides the agonizing fact that you have to eat brains and you basically need a gallon of hot sauce to go along with every drink or meal that passes your cold, pale lips. Sure, that's gotta be rough, but if you look past your undead diet you'll find that there are people who are oblivious to the fact that these creatures even exist. Zombies roaming the streets with their fake tans and cravings for brains... I mean, what if your partner was one... and you didn't pick up on it? Well, Malcolm Goodwin aka Detective Clive Babineaux, knows that feeling all too well— and

some would say he can be categorized as 'clueless'— but, make no mistake, this member of law enforcement is far from stupid. Goodwin, who plays the case- driven, hard-working crime solver, and our favorite go-getter is getting awfully close to figuring out what's really been going on in the streets of Seattle. And it's about damn time. He's been Liv's partner for quite a while now, and the fact that he's shrugged off her "quirks" as part of her psychic abilities is beyond me.

Goodwin took the time to chat with me about the remaining episodes of *iZombie*, eating brains for the first time (fake ones, of course), the potential for a crossover with *The 100* (which he is a big fan of, by the way), and he even teases a mind-blowing season finale!

MCKENZIE MORRELL: How similar is Clive to your personality in real life? Were there ever any defining, relatable moments for you?

MALCOLM GOODWIN: *Yeah, there are a lot of similarities between Clive and I. I think one of the most major things that we share is we can both have tunnel- vision. I'm telling you, when I focus on a task, I can kind of be not aware of everything else that's happening around. There could be obvious things happening around me but I don't necessarily pay attention to it because I'm so focused on the task at hand. I think I got that from working in theater and working on certain characters, being obsessed with that character that I had to do. So, I think Clive has that similarity in terms of that's why he doesn't really say anything about Liv's personality and differences because all he cares about is solving this murder. He's so focused on that. That was the one thing that I really, really, really connected with when it came to Clive. And we both can cook. That's another similarity. We can both cook. You know, I'm a little bit musical. I know Clive plays the piano; I play piano myself. The one thing Clive does better than me: he dresses better than me, hands down.*

[Laughs] And do you ever want to like steal any of his style?

You know what? I should. People have been telling me I definitely should take some fashion tips from Clive. So, maybe there are a couple of jackets—I think a leather jacket in particular that I should probably get in real life.

Definitely those suits. I never used to get my suits tailored, but after playing Clive, I get all my suits tailored now to fit. I've learned some things. Clive has helped me dress better.

Well, that's a good thing to take away. Maybe the costume department will look the other way and you can sneak some of those jackets. [Laughs]

[Laughs] I hope so, I hope so. The one thing I will not wear of Clive's is those tight pants. I can't do that, I just can't do that in real life, but I'd do it for Clive any day.

[Laughs] Now, obviously the show has really taken off since it first premiered. Did you ever kind of feel added pressure to live up to the hype of this project since Rob Thomas was behind it?

Yeah, you know, when people first heard the concept of a show about a girl who's a zombie who eats brains and helps solve murders, people's first reaction is, 'What? That sounds ridiculous.' So, we understand the reaction to the concept. We know it sounds very far-fetched and out there, but we knew that the material supported that. Rob Thomas and Diana Ruggiero, and the writers, they did the hard part already in making it work as a show. So, when we read it we were all sold, like 'Oh my God, this script is so great.' We felt added pressure just bringing the script to life—I guess, the pressure I felt was just bringing this character to life for Rob and Diane's vision. I think we all felt a certain level of pressure to do that because it was so good. We wanted to do the material justice and I think as an actor, you feel like that for a lot of your roles. You just want to do the character due justice for the material. That was the only pressure that we felt, but once it was out there and we kind of got the approval from the studio and the network that everything was working, we got Rob's blessing—he was happy with it—Diane's blessing—and we were like, we stand a good chance that the public and hopefully our fans could get behind it and so far so good.

Right? So far so good. And I mean, we got a glimpse into Clive's background. We're hoping to see more of that. But playing this character, do you have a working knowledge of his backstory? Like have you talked about it with the writers and stuff?

No, I found out when I got the script that Clive plays the piano and he's a "Game of Thrones" fan and he cooks and he's a Knicks fan. I'm a Knicks fan in real life too so I love that they threw that in there. Rob Thomas and actually the writer of that episode Bob Dearden—they're real San Antonio Spurs fans and so their Spurs beat my Knicks in '99 and we always talk trash back and forth, so it was interesting how they put those conversations in the episode. [Laughs] I didn't expect it so I was caught by surprise. I thought it was fun, but if they can tell us anything in

advance, they'd definitely be up for it, but a lot of the stuff I kind of found out really before we had to film it. You discover it in the script. The turnover is so fast so I didn't find out in advance. I was entertained just like the fans were like, 'oh, snap! He likes "Game of Thrones," he likes this, he can do this, okay, that's cool.' That's also what's fun about the show, you know, you're discovering new things about the character as you go on and obviously that informs the choices and decisions you make as a character and as an actor moving forward with the character.

Oh yeah, definitely. And I know you can't speak much to *if* and *when* Clive finds out that zombies are real, but in your personal life, how would you react if you found out that zombies were roaming your city and maybe you've been working with one this whole time?

It would be trippy if I had a friend of mine, for example, if I found out Rose Mclver or Rahul Kohl or Robert Buckley or David Anders or Aly Michalka were a zombie for real—if in real life they were like, 'dude, I have a confession to make. I've been on a show called "iZombie," but I'm really a zombie dude. I eat brains for real,'—that means there's Santa Claus; the Tooth Fairy's real; there are vampires; there are werewolves to me. That mean that opens up the realm of possibility to any supernatural things that I thought were impossible. That means all of those things are plausible and they can really, really exist. I would say then there's probably a Superman; there's probably you know a wolverine or something like that. It just makes all of those things very, very possible for me so I think I would trip. It would be freaky; it would trip me out, but obviously I wouldn't be against it. What a major adjustment for everybody [laughs] — just dealing with life. I think you'd have a real-world reaction because our show is grounded in the real world. We make so many pop culture references, from "Game of Thrones" to "The Walking Dead," even contemporary music. Our show exists in the now. Clive the character exists in the now. Clive's at work as a detective and he probably goes home and watches "The Walking Dead," but I think his reaction would be a real-world reaction, which I think would be interesting to see.

That would definitely open Pandora's box.

Oh, Yeah.

[Laughs] And, I mean, Liv gets to eat all these brains and have these multiple personalities. If you were eat anyone's brain, who would it be and what would you hope to gain from said brains?

[Laughs] You know what, there's probably a couple of people. I love comedy and I admire a lot of standup comedians. I really do. I think it's so brave what they do to put themselves on stage and I say probably like a Richard Pryor—his humor and his genius and I've just been watching a lot of Richard Pryor lately in anticipation for the movie that's coming out that Mike Epps is doing. I just find it really, really interesting and all the comedians like Kevin Hart and people that I really watch all the time—like

Martin Lawrence. I grew up watching Martin Lawrence and Eddie Murphy and everybody always places Richard Pryor at number one. So, I've zoned out recently and had to re-watch everything of his because I'd only seen it as a kid. I was a teenager so it affected me but it didn't have the impact that it's having on me right now. I go, 'wow, I was just too young to get it.' It's been really great. I just think that his honesty and the way he just, you know, with an open book talked about his life through comedy and obviously his progression and things he dealt with in life. He was very, very open about it. So, if I had to pick a brain if I was a zombie and take on that personality and those traits, I think, man, it would be interesting to walk in his shoes for a day. May he rest in peace. But it would be very, very interesting. In this moment, today, my answer would be Richard Pryor.

I think that's a great answer. And, I mean, the million dollar question is: have you tasted the fake brains on set and can you tell us what they are?

Oh yeah, it's terrible. The fake brains are terrible. It's some kind of gelatin. I haven't tasted it since season one and I'm okay not having to do that. I had it on a pizza. One of my favorite things growing up in New York is having a pizza slice and so they threw those fake brains on a slice of pizza and I was excited. I was like, 'oh, I can take it.' I couldn't eat pizza for two months after that. It ruined pizza. I don't know— it's sweet, but not sweet and has a funky texture and I'm not sure what they do with it, but it's edible. It's not gross gross, but when you eat a lot of it, that's when it gets disgusting. The first couple of bites were fine. When you're like 12 bites in, it's terrible!

[Laughs] Rose has a spit bucket, she gets to spit it out when she's done, but she's a champ with it. She goes to it and she has to taste those brains. But like I said, it ruined pizza for two months. I couldn't eat any pizza.

That is terrible. Your character and Dale are getting awfully close to figuring things out. Do you think if things go south, it'll make things even harder considering these two both have a professional and a romantic relationship?

Yeah, absolutely, especially when we find out that the person I work with and who I trust has been the major deterrent of keeping me away from the truth and that's Liv, in terms of switching out the brains. We finally realized that the brains weren't bovine, they were actually human brains. Obviously, we don't know right now based on that, that Liv is the one that forged those documents in the first place, but I think that as everything unfolds things will get interesting once— or if—it's revealed that Liv is involved and she's been his biggest deterrent of the truth. So, I think that'll complicate things because her lack of information that she's giving him—and obviously she's trying to protect this zombie world that I have no idea about. She's trying to protect other people, which I have no idea about, but I think it's impeding on my case and it's impeding on Dale's case in terms of moving forward... I think it's going to make

things more interesting, which is great! It just adds more drama, more conflict and it'll be interesting to see the consequences of that. And obviously I know where we go with it and I tell people it's worth watching the entire series and catching up because what you see in these next few episodes—especially our last two—it blew our minds. There's no way anybody can guess what's going to happen. We damn sure didn't guess it. We were like, "WHAT!" So, it's exciting. It's very, very exciting.

We're excited to see that unfold. The drama is great, obviously. And now, kind of a random question, but if you had to choose between you or Jessica Harmon becoming a zombie, who would it be and why?

[Laughs] If I had to choose between Clive or Dale becoming a zombie?

Yep.

Okay, okay. I would pick Dale, because I think she'll look better as a zombie than Clive would. I think I would look a mess. I think me having a zombie look—I think I would look more ashy than pale. I think it would look like I need a lot of lotion and I don't know if that would look quite as well on me as it looks on Dale. I would pick her because I think she would rock the look way better than I. Actually, Liv looks great as a zombie. Liv is the sexiest zombie on TV, so I think Dale can actually pull off the look as well. She could be a sexy zombie too. I would say Dale.

That's a good choice. Now, on the topic of Jessica, she's my go-to gal and recently she said that she would love to see Clive dropped into the world of "The 100" because his reactions would be priceless. Do you think that your character would be able to survive in that cut-throat world?

Hell, yeah. Hell, yeah. I watch "The 100," I'm a fan of the show. I binge-watched it at the beginning of this season... I know Eliza [Taylor] and Lindsey

[Morgan] and Bob [Morley] and I never watched the show and our "iZombie" crew that we have now worked on the first season of the show. It's pretty much the same crew, so they all loved the show. I decided that okay, I'm going to sit and watch the show. Holy crap! I lost an entire weekend. I binge-watched it on

Netflix and I was hooked. I have so much love for the entire cast and Jessica's brother Richard [Harmon], who plays Murphy and I'm like, he's FANTASTIC! I love "The 100." I am the target audience. Who knew that I was the exact target audience because the things that happened in the first two seasons I was blown away. Anyway, knowing the world of "The 100" like I do, I would think Clive would do very, very well in that environment. I think Clive's survival skills are pretty great and I think if he has to apply it when he's ever in the situation if he has to, you'll see him definitely rise to the occasion. So, I think he'll do well.

I totally agree and I think it should be sort of like a double team of Clive and Ravi going together because I just love to see you two in that setting, so a crossover needs to happen

[laughs].

Absolutely. They're a great cast and we all get along in the first place, so it would be fun.

Now, you recently attended WonderCon, correct?

Yup.

Is there a favorite part you look forward to attending these things?

The best thing is, Rahul and I and the rest of the cast, we walk the floor and it's great to meet all the fans, have the autograph signings. The Q&A is always fun because you never know what anybody is going to ask or what story any of us is going to tell. It's interesting to see what's going to happen. We really don't know. It's a chance for us to see our fans and the only reason we're coming back for a third season is because of our fans. We're a very, very grateful group of people and we shake their hands and do pictures and answer questions. We love it. We love it to the point that we walk the floor and everyone's like, 'what are you doing?' And we want to walk the floor and meet people and say hello and interact. It's always a good time. We really get a kick out of that, so that's what I look forward to.

That's so amazing. Not many people would walk the floor, so you are brave, my friend.

Yeah, Rahul and I did it at San Diego WonderCon last year and now we're going to do it again this year. We're going to keep it up.

That would be awesome. And now, obviously your character is a detective and we all know that people of the law love doughnuts, hence a perfect segue to my signature question: If you had invent a doughnut based on your personality, what toppings would be on it?

[Laughs] Well, you know, everyone knows I have a sweet tooth, so my perfect doughnut is going to have some Jelly Bellys on it. I'm a Jelly Belly fiend. Some Gummy Bears. It will be a powdered doughnut first and then we'll put some Gummy Bears on it, we'll put some Jelly Bellys on it and then we'll drizzle it with some chocolate sauce. Mmm, mmm, mmm.

That actually sounds really delectable.

Yeah, that right there would be my signature doughnut.

That is a great signature doughnut. Just wrapping things up, do you have any messages to the fans or a little tease to get people to continue watching the show?

Yeah, oh my gosh, how do I say this without giving anything away? Well, one, it's so hard to talk about it without giving things away, but I think what happens is so crazy and so—the way they kind of blow things up—everything is shaking up. It's not what people are going to expect, but I think they're going to love it. Or they probably didn't think the show would go in this particular direction or have certain things happen and it does. The payoff for everything with Max Rager with Ravi trying to find a cure with Clive and Dale, trying to figure out the Meat Cute massacre and the Chaos Killer case, everything eventually comes to a head in the most incredible way that you are not going to want to miss. It's worth binge-watching somehow whether it's on Hulu, whether you get the episodes on the CW website or iTunes—it is going to be well worth it. I don't think you're going to be disappointed because we definitely were like, "WOW!" It's worth it. We're definitely excited to see the reactions once the episodes end.

***iZombie* airs Tuesdays at 9/8c on The CW**
