



Press Release

TALK TO THE DEAD!

(Another Scandal airs Mondays to Thursdays @ 7.30pm)

Is Malik Vid a conniving conman out to channel cold hard cash - or does he truly have psychic abilities?

Scandal screens yet another controversial topic and character with the introduction of Malik Vid, a new age guru/spiritualist, played by Durban-born actor, Rajesh Gopie. "I grew up wanting to be a teacher but back in those days there were a lot of teachers who were also involved in drama and so it was a natural progression for me as I really think that drama is a wonderful outlet for teaching," comments Rajesh.

Malik, our psychic medium, has been counseling The Voice's sports writer, Jaco Geldenhuys (Dewald Reynecke). Our office comedian and playboy had a hot romance last year with the paper's receptionist, Tamia Bardill (Renate Stuurman). After a major bout of depression and a suicide attempt, Jaco has finally found peace of mind with the acceptance that he's gay. He's officially come out of the closet after guidance from Malik, who has also, apparently, helped him connect with a former (and very dead) childhood friend, Charlie.

Now Jaco wants Tamia to find direction in her life. She's rejected property developer and landlord of the paper's premises, Tino Martin's (Clint Brink) advances because she's still getting over her murdered boyfriend, Breyton. He was the paper's photographer and was recently killed, while on a news assignment...on the day he planned to propose to her.

In the very near future, we see the grieving Tamia talking to her dear departed. She'll also embark on a couple of new and passionate affairs, which should make for absolutely riveting viewing.

“The important thing about taking on a villainous-type character is the ability for the actor to see the humour in the situation, despite the fact that people might hate you for the character you play,” says Rajesh. As Rajesh humorously states, the only similarity between him and the character is that they look the same.

But is Malik Vid actually a compassionate, intelligent and sincere man with a “gift”? Can he/does he communicate with the spirit world? “The thing about clairvoyance is that people have strong opinions on the topic - whether you believe in it, or not. That will be what makes people watch Malik. I don't have the psychic abilities that Malik possesses, but that's the challenge - portraying a character that is different from you, yet doing it justice.”

Born into a working class family in Durban (his father was a truck driver and his mother a housewife), Rajesh's acting career begun in school plays. “I still remember as a child doing my first play in grade 2, it was a nativity play and I played one of the three wise men. I still clearly remember those songs,” reminisces Rajesh. Just before being cast on Scandal he was doing “The Coolie” a play, which ran for five weeks at The Playhouse in Durban. Theatre has been his grounding but he has appeared on other notable TV shows, "Madam and Eve", "SOS", and "Zero Tolerance".

Thinking back on his childhood Rajesh says the one memory that he cherishes more than anything is that of his grandmother. “She used to wear a sari all the time and had beautiful sandals and a nose ring and had really fascinating Indian jewellery. She also used to make me special shaped *roti* and made figurines, she was very Indian.”

And a word of advice for upcoming actors: “Actors have to do a lot to pay their dues and this is a very difficult industry to break into. People should understand that it's not about glamour but the love of acting and performing. I don't agree with playing up the fame aspect of the job as that gives people the wrong idea.”

We predict much Scandalous debate over the next few weeks....

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