


COUNTIN' THE HITS:
Now of *CSI*, Jorja Fox has
been a regular on *ER* and
West Wing.



cold
characters
and warm
regards

As forensic detective Sarah Sidle on the CBS series *CSI*, Jorja Fox works with the dead, searching for clues that will help solve the mystery of their demise. She has made some discoveries among the living, too.

"I was a jaded New Yorker with this idea that everyone in L.A. sells their soul," says Fox, thirty-three. "And I don't think I've met people with more soul than the ones I've worked with out here."

It helps that Fox has worked on some of the best shows on television, first as Dr. Maggie Doyle on *ER* for two-and-a-half seasons, then as Secret Service Agent Gina Toscano on *The West Wing*.

"It was huge for me," says Fox of her gig as Toscano. "Here I am, this liberal Democrat, enthusiastically political person, and I had a chance to be on a show that tells that story every week."

Offered a more sizable role on *CSI* in the fall of 2000, she reluctantly traded in her earpiece and pistol for a scalpel and latex gloves. The unheralded show turned out to be a surprise critical and ratings hit, and Fox's charmed Hollywood life continued.

The daughter of an Irish-Canadian father and a Belgian-Canadian mother who immigrated to the U.S. from Montreal prior to her birth, Fox had the nomadic childhood common to many actors. "My mom had to move every two or three years, even if it was just a block away to a new house," says Fox.

Today, Fox is tall (five-foot-nine) and rail-thin, but growing up in small Melbourne Beach, Florida, she was overweight. "My mom was a child of the Depression and World War II," she says, "so the best thing that she could do

for me and my older brother was to feed us regularly. I was eating five meals a day. Suddenly I realized that, wow, maybe I could eat three meals instead."

Newly thin, fifteen-year-old Fox entered a modeling contest at a local mall on a whim — and won. "I was the palest, whitest kid with dark brown hair in Florida, where the ideal was to be blonde and tan," says the onetime tomboy. "The whole town was just aghast."

Fox subsequently moved to New York and launched a lucrative career as a teen model. "It was one of the greatest things I've ever done," she says. "Not only to move to New York, but then to go to Europe for six months and meet people from all over the world."

While many teens would sell their souls to model professionally, Fox retired from the runway at eighteen to pursue her true love: acting. Studying at HB Studios while supporting herself as a coat-check girl and bartender, she found only sporadic work in indie films such as *The Kill-Off* (1989) and *Happy Hell Night* (1992) until 1993, when she was cast in the ABC series *Missing Persons*. It lasted less than one season, but the experience persuaded her to move to Hollywood.

Fox now has a burgeoning film career (*Memento*) and Honeypot, an L.A. theater company she co-founded with a group of fellow New York transplants; but she's happy to dedicate the bulk of her time to *CSI*.

"It's been such an amazing place to come to work," says Fox. "And if it's your job and it happens to be amazing, then that's the best thing you can ever have."

—Todd Longwell

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