



ROGUE STATE

As a dark role on a hit show turns a deeper shade of black, Rupert Friend relishes the risks.

BY NICOLE PAJER



In Showtime's *Homeland*, Rupert Friend portrays Peter Quinn, a CIA black-ops agent who travels the globe to take down the nation's most threatening terrorists. In reality, his life could be considered just as alluring.

After a full day of fight training for his upcoming film, *Hitman: Agent 47*, Friend retires to his hotel room where, in James Bond-like fashion, he rifles through the mini bar for the ingredients to make a Negroni — equal parts Campari, gin and vermouth.

"When your body is aching and you've got scratches in places you've never had scratches, you have to have a decent cocktail," he explains. The film, due out August 28, will cater to the secret-agent skill set that he's developed during three years on *Homeland*.

He joined the show in the second season with the undercover mission of taking out volatile U.S. Marine Sergeant Nicholas Brody (Damian Lewis). The role has been an absolute dream job. "I'm from a village in the middle of England, so the idea of playing an American CIA black-ops assassin who is a total bad-ass is fun," he says. "I had to do it."

After two seasons of supporting series principals Claire Danes and Mandy Patinkin, Friend took a center turn in season four. Quinn battled personal turmoil and went rogue in an attempt to capture a Taliban leader. There was also a romantic twist that prompted the troubled agent to confess feelings for CIA station chief Carrie Mathison (Danes).

"I loved reading where they took Quinn," Friend enthuses. "I also felt more responsibility about what they were asking of me. I like the challenge and I like rising to it."

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK OCKENFELS/SHOWTIME

With credits in such films as *Pride & Prejudice*, *The Libertine* and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, Friend has relished the transition to television. "It's a different director each time, and you have no idea how anything will play out. It's a lot more uncertain. But that can be a great thing because, just like in life, we don't know what is going to happen next. To have things unfold in that way is exciting."

In addition to playing a genetically modified killing machine in *Hitman: Agent 47*, Friend is preparing to direct his debut feature, *Barton & Charlie & Checco & Bill*. He will also star in it, alongside Emily Blunt. He describes the script, which he wrote, as "an independent film about two con artists — a love story and a road trip, very much like *Paper Moon*."

He's also dabbled as a songwriter, having once provided lyrics for London jazz quartet Kairos 4Tet, something he'd love to pursue again. "Whether I'm part of somebody else's story, creating a story for someone to tell or creating my own story, I really love being a storyteller."

Looking ahead to *Homeland*'s fifth season — to be shot in Germany for a fall debut — the actor speculates that his character will be forced to confront his internal demons. "It's clear that the pull of the dark underworld that Quinn lives in is very strong for him. Like a drug addict, I think he finds it impossible to shake."

If Quinn's story arc ultimately leads to the character's demise, Friend is completely on board. "The story must come first. I don't like the idea of things outstaying their welcome. Get in, punch hard, get out." ©