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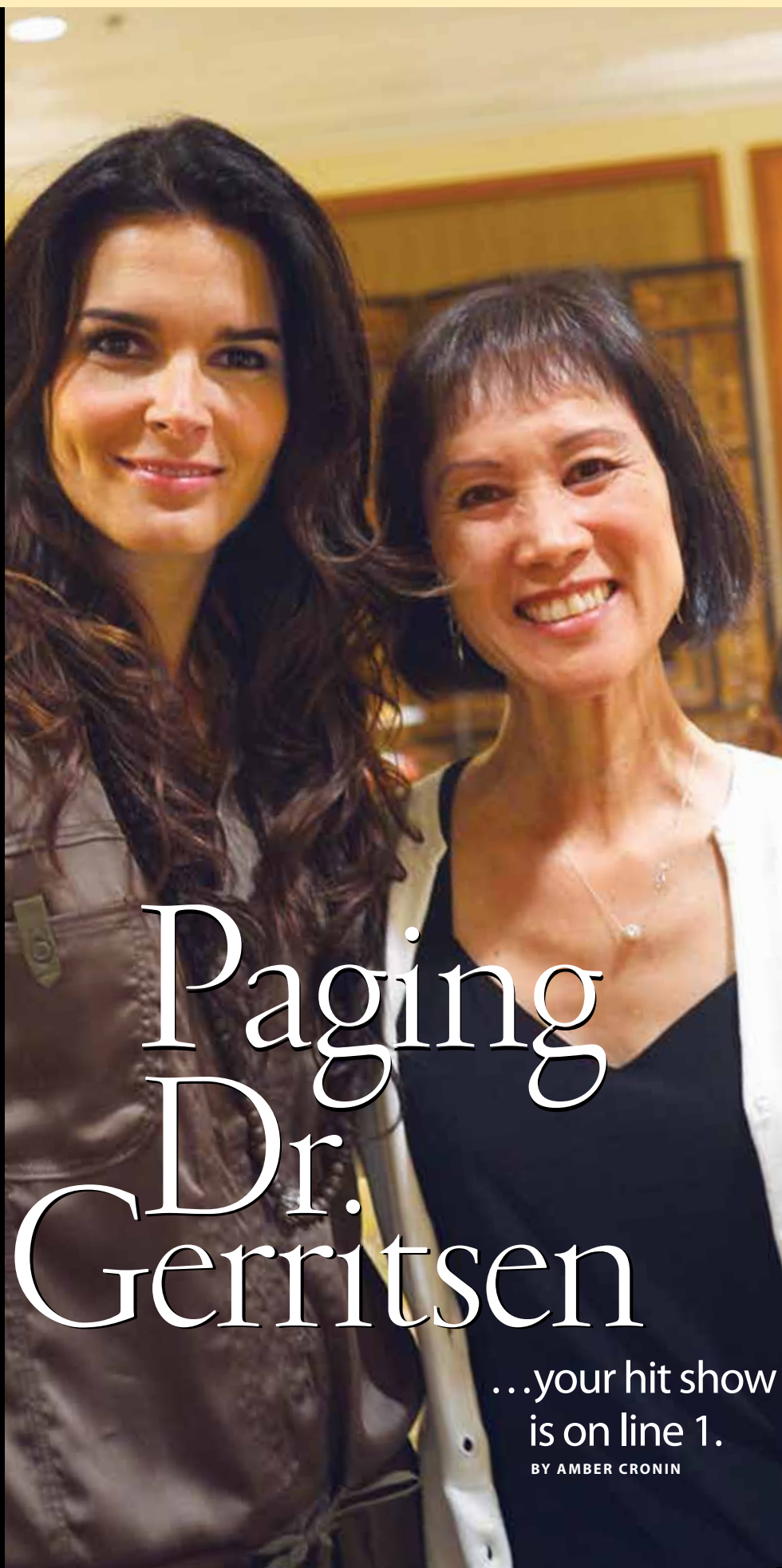
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Robert W. Beebe, D.D.S.



Dr. Robert Beebe  
LVI Clinical Instructor



# Paging Dr. Gerritsen

...your hit show  
is on line 1.

BY AMBER CRONIN

## Exactly how does a novelist become a TV goddess?

A producer in Hollywood read all the books, bought the character rights, and *Rizzoli & Isles* [TNT Monday nights 10 EST] went into production. I don't have anything to do with the project creatively...They do call me with questions from time to time.

## Does every episode spring from your books?

No. Only the pilot came directly from *The Apprentice*. I never know what each episode's going to bring, so I'm just as surprised as everyone else by every story!

## Is it strange to have your characters take over and begin lives of their own on the small screen?

It's been kind of a fantasy...listening to words I've written coming out of these characters' mouths [Maura Isles, played by Sasha Alexander, and Jane Rizzoli, played by Angie Harmon].

The best part of watching *R&I* is knowing these women come from my imagination. I love *hearing* the names of characters with whom I've lived for the past ten years...I know what a privilege it is.

## What are some specific personality differences between the television characters and the characters from your book?

The personality of Jane [Rizzoli] is very similar between the books and the television show, even if Angie Harmon is far more attractive than my fictional Jane.

The character of Maura [Isles] has been altered quite a bit. The television Maura is much more of a fashionista and also a sunnier and more optimistic personality than the dark and gloomy Maura of my books.

## Did you always want to be a writer, or was it a talent you stumbled upon?

I was a writer from the time I was about seven years old, and I went to med school because I was [also] interested in science [she has a degree from UC-San Francisco in internal medicine]. When I went on maternity leave, I had time to pick up writing again.

## Do you use your own experiences as a doctor?

The way a doctor thinks and approaches  
(Continued on page 66)

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## INTERVIEW

Paging Dr. Gerritsen (continued from page 59)

things is taken directly from my experience, but I'm not a forensic pathologist, so I do have to hit the books from time to time.

How did your writing morph from romantic thrillers like *Call After Midnight* to medical thrillers like the *Rizzoli & Isles* series?

I started writing [romance thrillers] because I enjoyed reading them, and I began writing medical thrillers because I've always followed my own interests.



Not only has the show been picked up for next year, the stars themselves have scintillating backstories. Harmon is well known to *Law & Order* fans and married to former pro football player Jason Sehorn. Alexander is cinematic royalty, having married director Edoardo Ponti, son of actress Sophia Loren and the late Carlo Ponti [*Doctor Zhivago*].

With such a busy schedule writing and being on the road, how do you find time to stay healthy and fit?

Time to stay fit while on the road? Hardly! I have ambitions to use the hotel fitness rooms, but tennis shoes are just too darned heavy to lug around in my carry-on. And I indulge in wine at lunch and dinner and eat the richest foods because they give me comfort while I'm away from home. In the UK, I ate french fries just about every single day! But you also burn lots of nervous energy on book tours, and surprisingly, I came home only one pound heavier.

[At home here in Camden,] I'm careful of what I eat—I don't eat a lot of carbs and try to eat a lot of protein; I don't have a sweet tooth. Your body's a machine; you have to maintain it.

Take a fledgling writer like me through a typical day.

If I'm home, I wake up, eat breakfast, get on my treadmill, dialing it up to the highest incline for 45 minutes before I do my free weights. Then I'm at my desk all day, writing.

Did you say *highest incline*? Now you're really scaring me!

I don't write a word until I finish my treadmill in the morning. I'm a big believer in vitamins—especially calcium—for women of my age. ■

➤ To read a short story Tess has written for *Portland Magazine's* readers, visit Online Extras at [portlandmonthly.com](http://portlandmonthly.com).