

## '12 GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS'

### Cast Bios

**KATRINA LAW (Anna)** -- From a former slave turned fighter supporting Spartacus during his uprising, to the daughter of the notorious leader of The League of Assassins, and an attorney who drops everything when her sister is accused of murder, Katrina Law has brought to life some of the strongest and most complex female characters on screen today. Throughout 2015-16 Law will reprise her role as Nyssa Al Ghul on season four of The CW's hit action-adventure series "Arrow."

In addition to "Arrow" she recently joined the cast of ABC Family's pilot "Guilt" starring alongside Billy Zane as Natalie, an attorney whose sister becomes the top suspect in the savage murder of her roommate in London. Law is probably best known for her starring role as Mira on the critically acclaimed STARZ series "Spartacus: Blood and Sand" and "Spartacus: Vengeance."

Born in Philadelphia and raised in South Jersey, Law grew up with a Catholic father of German and Italian descent who served in the US Armed Forces, and a Taiwanese Buddhist mother. The diversity presented to her at such a young age taught her to keep an open mind and an open heart on all matters. Law was always enthralled with all things pertaining to the arts and excelled in dance and theatre. She attended The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, where she received a B.A. in Theater. Law stayed in theater for several years honing her skills, and even received two Irene Ryan A.C.T.F. nominations for her work as Olivia in *Twelfth Night* (Stockton Theater Fest) and as the Bride in *Blood Wedding* (Stockton Theater Fest.)

In 2001, Katrina landed her first television role on the NBC series "Third Watch" and continued to build her resume by securing roles in notable television series including "CSI: Miami" (CBS), "Legend of the Seeker" (ABC) and "Chuck" (NBC). She also starred in the web series "The Resistance," which was picked up by Sam Raimi's Ghost House Pictures and Starz Media, and went on to air on SyFy, iTunes, Xbox Live, The PlayStation Network and Dailymotion. The pilot was the first series originally created for the web that premiered on television.

In addition to starring in "12 Gifts of Christmas," Law previously starred in the Hallmark Channel original movie "Snow Bride," in which she played the lead character Greta Kaine, an entertainment tabloid reporter whose job is to expose the rich and famous. "Snow Bride" premiered in 2013 and was the network's second highest rated original movie ever at the time. Law has had both supporting and lead roles in independent films such as "Lucky Numbers," "Emmet's Mark," "The Learning Curve" and "Death Valley," to name a few.

Law currently supports a variety of charities including Kitt Crusaders, Children's Miracle Network, Variety Children's Charity and The International Rescue Committee. In addition to acting, she also sings and plays bass guitar in a band called Soundboard Fiction.

# # #

(more)

## HALLMARK CHANNEL/'12 GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS' – Cast Bios – Page 2

**AARON O'CONNELL (Marc)** – Of English and Irish ancestry, Aaron John O'Connell was born in Dayton, Ohio, where he grew up with his sisters Amy, Abby and Anna. Their parents, Mark Alan O'Connell, a former player for the Cincinnati Bengals and current President of ChemStation of Indiana, and Kathryn (Deeble) O'Connell, met during college in Ohio. His grandfather Wayne Deeble was a pianist who taught O'Connell at a very young age to play the piano and he has used that ability, as well as his guitar skills, in his roles as an actor. In addition to his musical talent, O'Connell was an athlete and grew up playing football, basketball and baseball.

After graduating Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, Indiana in 2004, attended Purdue University where he studied Health, Fitness, and Nutrition. While there, O'Connell signed with Ford Models in Chicago, Illinois. His quick success moved him to New York City where he worked with magazines such as GQ, Vanity Fair, French Vogue, German Vogue and brands including Carolina Herrera, Hanes, Lucky Brand Jeans, Abercrombie & Fitch and Jockey.

After booking a few successful national commercials, O'Connell caught the eye of writer, producer and director Tyler Perry, who cast him in "The Haves and The Have Nots," the first television drama he created. Due to the growing popularity of the series, O'Connell garnered much attention for his role of Wyatt Cryer. In 2014 he was offered his first supporting role in the film "Prince for Christmas" alongside actress Viva Bianca, which led to being offered his role "12 Gifts of Christmas."

When O'Connell gets a break from the entertainment business, he loves to fly. In 2013, he earned his private pilot's license and later became an instrument-rated pilot in 2014. While he enjoys flying his Cirrus SR22 recreationally, he also flies for the charity Pilots 'N Paws, ferrying dogs from kill shelters to their new families.

He currently resides in Los Angeles, where he continues to work on his craft.

# # #

**DONNA MILLS (Joyce)** – Donna Mills was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. Her father was an oil executive and her mother was a dance instructor, and Mills studied ballet throughout her teens. After spending a year studying drama at the University of Illinois, she made her way to New York, where she landed an understudy role in Woody Allen's first play, "Don't Drink the Water."

Mills' first television roles were on the daytime soap operas "The Secret Storm" and "Love is a Many Splendored Thing." She made her film debut in 1967 in the hard-hitting drama, "The Incident." In 1971, she co-starred with Clint Eastwood in the popular thriller "Play Misty for Me." Throughout the seventies, Mills made frequent guest appearances on top-rated series and carved out a niche working on television movies.

In 1980, Donna joined the cast of the hit primetime soap "Knots Landing." With her portrayal of the conniving Abby Cunningham, she made the show her own and became one of TV's biggest stars. After a successful nine-year tenure, Mills left the cast to pursue other projects

but returned for the series finale in 1993. She continued to headline an array television films, several of which she produced, often highlighting important social issues.

Mills has long been a supporter of various political and human rights causes, including Easter Seals, Women in Film, and ECO (Earth Communications Office). She has never been married, but has one daughter, Chloe, whom she adopted in 1995. These days she divides her time between work and motherhood.

--HALLMARK CHANNEL--