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An Office and a Gentleman

Taking a coffee break with Oscar Nunez from NBC's *The Office*.

BY PAULO MURILLO

Office-ionados know Oscar Nunez better as Oscar Martinez, Dunder Mifflin's straight-laced accountant who was accidentally outed in Season 3 when his bumbling, inappropriate boss, Michael Scott (played by Steve Carell), announced to the entire office that Martinez is gay. As if that weren't bad enough, Michael then—in typical awkward *Office* fashion—proceeded to hug him and plant one on him in an effort to set things right. And that's why we love *The Office*. In anticipation of the hilarious show's return to TV on Sept. 25, we took a coffee break with Nunez, who talked with us about the show's eight Emmy noms, what to expect this season and what his family thought of his lip-lock with Carell.

Congratulations on the show's eight Emmy nominations.

Thank you so much.

Where were you when the nominations were announced?

I was at home and NBC sent me an e-mail.

Did you scream like a little girl?

No, I didn't [laughs]. I crumbled to the floor like an old man.

What do these nominations mean to you?

It's all so surreal. When you're a kid, you're watching *The Odd Couple* and *The Carol Burnett Show* and you think this is great, maybe one day. Then you're here and you're doing it.

You won an Emmy for your part in the webisode "Kevin's Loan" last year. Do you sleep

with your Emmy like Kathy Griffin?

No. My manager has it. I have two SAG awards at my house and then I have an Emmy sitting in his office. He loves it. I have to get another award, so I can swap it.

So tell us about the new season?

There are some crazy episodes. We have a bunch of new writers and it's nice to see a lot of fun

faces directing us like Paul Feig and Greg Daniels. I love Greg.

What's in store for your character, Oscar Martinez? Is he still gay?

No, they took him to a retreat. They brainwashed him [laughs]. So far I'm just kind of doing my thing, keying in on the main actors.

Were you ever criticized for not being gay enough in the show?

No. I think he's pretty gay. I was just playing a character and then they said, "OK, you're gay." He's already a character, so I can't come the next day and act like a crazy queen. Not every gay person is flamboyant.

What did your family think about

your man-on-man kiss with Steve Carell?

They just pissed their pants. They thought it was hilarious. You know, he wasn't supposed to kiss me. That was all Steve.

What do you like most about *The Office*?

It's been five seasons and I still can't believe how people are crazy about the show. It all seems so easy and it's not, but that's the beauty. Comedy is something you can't force. You can't lift weights. It's either funny or it isn't.

The fifth season of The Office premieres Sept. 25 on NBC. Check out nbc.com or your local listings for more details.

30 Second TV Preview

NBC welcomes *SNL* alum Molly Shannon back to TV alongside Selma Blair as the trashtastic mother-daughter duo *Kath & Kim* on Oct. 9. Otherwise, it's all action as charming spy dramedy *Chuck* and the high-flying, time-warping comic book thriller, *Heroes*, premiere new seasons on Sept. 22.

ABC's not messing with success as the world's best English telenovela, *Ugly Betty*, keeps the Thursday lineup spicy with help from the McDreamy cast of *Grey's Anatomy*, both returning on Sept. 25. Not soapy enough for you? Then catch up on *Desperate Housewives*, premiering Oct. 5, and *Dirty Sexy Money*, with TV's top transsexual, Candis Cayne, on Oct. 1.

CSI continues to dominate the procedural market for CBS with a ninth season, beginning Oct. 9, but if you can't wait to get to the scene of the crime, *Without a Trace* reappears on Sept. 23. For those who prefer their nerds less serious, *The Big Bang Theory* is back on Sept. 22, the same night Neil Patrick Harris reprises his lady's man lothario in another season of *How I Met Your Mother*.

On Sept. 1, the CW continues to steam up the small screen with the second season of the sensuously scandalous *Gossip Girl* and *One Tree Hill*, rumored to be in its last season. The premiere of the long awaited *90210* on Sept. 2, however, promises to be the guiltiest pleasure.

On Fox, *Dawson's Creek* fans can see Joshua Jackson again in prime time in J.J. Abrams' new series, *Fringe*.

Not to be outdone, cable brings cross-dressing back to comedy with HBO's *Little Britain USA* beginning Sept. 7 and *Summer Heights High* starting Nov. 9. Want something a bit bloodier? Well, cable's hottest serial killer is back in *Dexter*, on Showtime Sept. 28.

Logo's new based-on-a-true-story athletic sudser, *Shirts and Skins*, hits the air on Sept. 15. Based on the ads, the shirt to skin ratio is probably delightfully low.

—Ryan Baber