

APRIL 18, 1994

FAUX ARRESTS

The Real Cops Were Acting; the TV Cop Wasn't

THE LAST WORD ON *NYPD Blue*'s recent week-long frolic around our city, in the end, comes down to this. James McDaniel—for sixteen years a New York actor—tries to cross Tenth Avenue at 52nd Street, certainly off duty but still recognizable as Lieutenant Arthur Fancy, the black detective-squad chief he has portrayed since moving to L.A. almost a year ago. It's 9:30 P.M. The traffic signal says DONT WALK. A police car is slowly cruising up Tenth.

McDaniel's first thought? "They get you for jaywalking in L.A. That's one of the first things you learn out there." His second thought? "Come

on, McDaniel, are you kidding? This is your town! Just cross the goddamned street!"

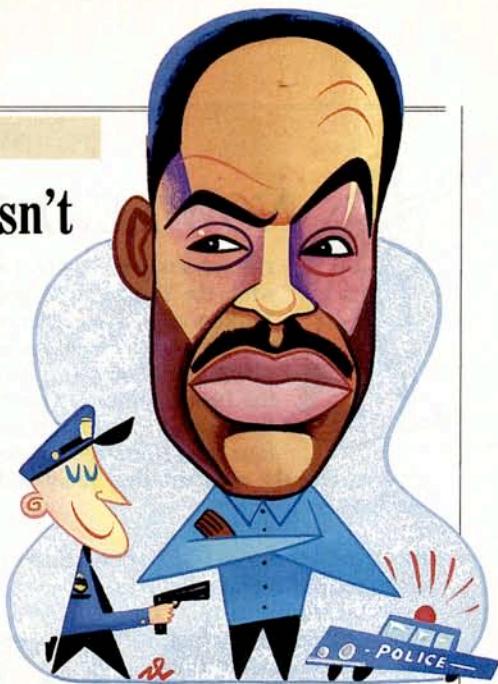
The cruiser's flashing red light freezes McDaniel; it's followed by a burst from the siren. Two officers—a black man, a white woman—emerge, in arrest mode.

"When they told me to spread 'em, I was furious. When they slapped the cuffs on, I was amazed. When they told me we were going downtown and tossed me into the backseat, I was completely outraged. 'This isn't L.A.!' I kept thinking. 'This is New York City. *New York City!*' That's when they turned around from up front, and the

lady cop says: 'So where can we take you, Lieutenant Fancy?' "

Lieutenant Fancy was not amused. "You know, if those two cops had both been white, well, that really wouldn't have been so funny. I mean, honestly, I would have been terrified," McDaniel admits. "As it is, I just got mad."

This was not the first time that the NYPD embraced McDaniel to the point of strangulation. "Hey, the other



day, I found myself talking to 900 cops—900 absolutely adoring cops—at a banquet for former police commissioner Kelly. And it freaked me out at one point. I'm a kid from the wrong side of the tracks in D.C.—that's who I am. Lecturing a roomful of cops? Pretty strange."

In keeping with his Lieutenant Fancy persona, McDaniel did not see fit to discipline his arresting officers unduly. They instantly chauffeured him to his destination. He let them off with token gifts. "I gave them these little *NYPD Blue* pins I had on me. That is, after I reamed them out verbally. They're really like kids, I'm learning—they just love to have fun, cops. I mean, I lost it. They were thrilled."

BARRY SINGER