

'Quantum' will leap into lives of Lee Harvey Oswald, Nixon

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The quantum leaps are turning into historical vaults.

During the three seasons of "Quantum Leap," Scott Bakula has leaped into the bodies of athletes, teachers, Broadway performers, cowboys, even women.

But this fall, on at least two programs, Bakula, as Sam Beckett, will vault into two real-life characters — Lee Harvey Oswald and Richard Nixon.

The Oswald tale — a two-hour special kicking off the season in September — is a result of a brief association that executive producer-creator Don Bellisario had with the accused assassin when the two were in the same Marine unit in 1958.

"Like most Americans, I watched all aspects of the Kennedy assassination on television," Bellisario recalls. "And I was shocked when I realized I knew Lee Harvey Oswald.

"He was a strange duck. . . . I recall some of my Marine pals saying

at the time that Oswald was 'kind of crazy but harmless.' Well, history has proven that Oswald was anything but harmless."

The script in which Sam becomes Nixon is still being worked on.

"Now that we're an established series, we can take a few more liberties with our scripts," Bellisario says.

Other "Quantum Leap" plots for the fall season:

— A two-person show featuring a romantic interlude on an island with Bakula and Brooke Shields, a la her "Blue Lagoon" movie.

— A three-part episode dealing with a murder mystery in a small town.

— An hour that's completely animated.

— A series of programs featuring an "evil leaper" — an attractive woman who wants to harm people rather than help them.

— And an episode in which Bakula gets involved with Dr. Ruth Westheimer.

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