

Add it Up

Any way you do the math, *NUMB3RS* star David Krumholtz is a bona fide Hollywood success story.

JEN JONES

A quick look at David Krumholtz's bio reveals a mile-long list of credits, while Googling turns up rabid fan sites like "The Slobbering David Krumholtz Groupies." It's clear that while 28-year-old Krumholtz isn't quite a household name like Brad Pitt or Matthew Perry, he's made an indelible mark on the Tinseltown landscape.

While Krumholtz has played everything from lovable head elf in *The Santa Clause* movies to a dorky high-

school sidekick in *10 Things I Hate About You*, most recognize him from his small-screen turn on the CBS hit *NUMB3RS*. As Charlie Eppes, Krumholtz uses mad math skills to crack FBI cases. Taking a few tips from his crafty character, we sat him down for a friendly interrogation.

in Queens, N.Y. People always told me I was funny, but I never connected the two things. At the time, the Broadway play *Conversations with My Father* decided that instead of casting

"Math has come back to haunt me in the most wonderful way."

a "cookie-cutter" type, they'd find a normal kid off the street. They went to New York City public schools looking for funny or talented kids who might look like [a young] Judd Hirsch. My teacher said I should go and audition for it, and before you knew it, I had a huge part in a Broadway play. I kind of came out of nowhere. There was a wonderful divine intervention; I believe I'm on a spiritual path. I feel extremely fortunate.

Before *NUMB3RS*, you were on five (count 'em!) ill-fated shows that never made it past 13 episodes. What gave this show the magic touch?

It's so hard to tell what's going to be a hit; there's no formula

for success. The second I read this pilot, I knew it would be the greatest thing I've ever done. I loved the idea of the convergence of academia and crime solving. When the show first came out, there was a great backlash against reality television and a whole audience of people who wanted to see something substantial. I knew the show and I were the perfect combination, and luckily, the producers felt the same way.

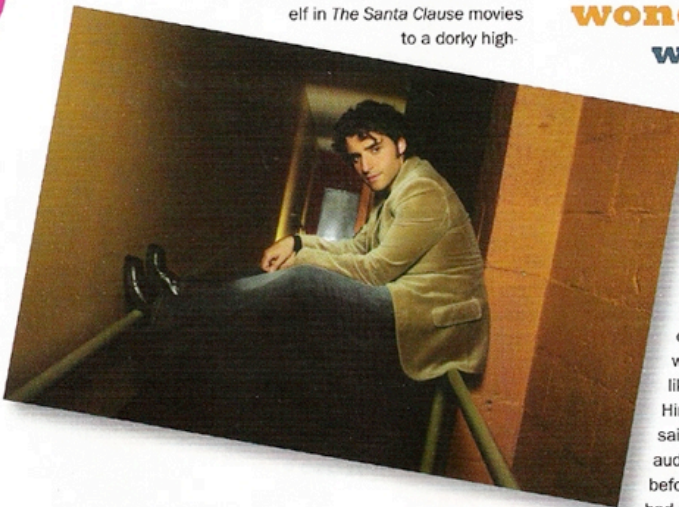
We all know you play a math genius. Are you good at math in real life?

I'm much more of an artist. I was absolutely terrible at math. I was so bad at it that it kind of became funny. I struggled so desperately with math, but it only affirmed my belief that I was meant to do something with literature. I didn't let it freak me out. Math has come back to haunt me in the most wonderful way.

***Liberty Heights* was a meaningful film for the Jewish community. What was your experience like working on it?**

[Director] Barry Levinson conceived of that film because of a review from *Entertainment Weekly's* Lisa Schwarzbaum for the movie *Sphere*. She had bashed him for casting Dustin Hoffman, whom she felt was "too Jewish" to be a real action hero. That really bugged [Levinson], and he wrote the movie as a response. I feel it's wrong for a Jewish writer to write something that stereotypes Jews—it confirms anti-Semitic beliefs. The movie is about how segregated we all are, when really we are all very much the same.

Jews are always portrayed as ultra-sympathetic characters, like Holocaust survivors. My character was sort of a racist Jew, and it was great since nothing like that had been presented in films before. I think



It seems like you stumbled into acting accidentally.

At 13, I was a junior high kid

it was really important. You can be persecuted and still find reasons to be discriminatory. It happens all over the world.

The recent *Tenacious D* movie you were in seems poised to become a cult classic.

I used to watch them play at clubs very early on, before Jack Black hit it big. I ended up working on a job with Kyle Gass; he's a good friend and a sweet

guy. He was kind enough to call me up and ask me to do a cameo in the film. I couldn't be more thrilled to be in that movie because it's a hilarious script. I'm a huge fan of Jack Black; I think he's a revelation.

What do you think your most memorable role to date has been?

NUMB3RS is closest to my heart. I actually loved playing the

brother in *Slums of Beverly Hills*. He's so kitschy and obnoxious. I also loved [my character Benny in] *Big Shot* because he was the only "real guy" I've ever played. It was cool to break the fourth wall and talk to the camera. ★

As a notorious right-brain, freelance writer **JEN JONES** was always far better at English than math. Visit her website at www.creative-groove.com.

Freedom Teacher

See how the woman behind MTV's new film used Anne Frank's diary to teach tolerance.

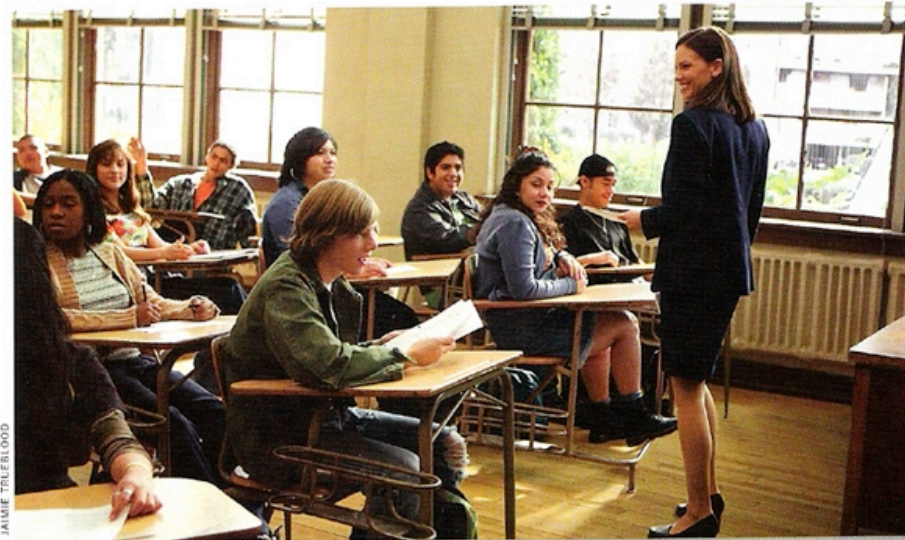
RACHEL LEAMON

The recent MTV film *Freedom Writers* is based on the true story of Erin Gruwell. As a 24-year-old college grad, Erin taught in a tension-filled urban high school in Long Beach, Calif. Her students had first-hand exposure to racial division, gang violence, juvenile detention and drugs. But Erin changed her students'

lives by showing them that they could achieve a bright future.

She jump-started this change by assigning her classes to read *The Diary of Anne Frank* while keeping their own journals. These journals were published in the book *The Freedom Writers Diary - How a Teacher*

and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them. The book turned the students into best-selling authors and caught the attention of the media. I spoke to Erin about her teaching experience, her current activities, and her involvement in the movie *Freedom Writers*.



Hilary Swank as Erin Gruwell in *Freedom Writers*