

# Mr Scary's really MIR GOOD

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**F**ABIAN Lodeje is a villain extraordinaire – his slight limp, *bokbaard* and flat accent make him look and sound like a bad guy.

The London-born ad exec turned actor speaks with a clenched jaw typical of the English, which gives his voice a cutting edge.

But he's nothing short of a 180-degree difference from Bola Abayomi, the character he plays with distinction in *Jacob's Cross*, now on Mzansi Magic on DSTV.

A few seasons ago Bola had to abduct a child and this scene etched him into the psyche of his viewers as the baddest of the baddies on TV.

"A month ago I was shooting a commercial with this nine year old," says Fabian, in his English-Nigerian accent.

"Before we started the shoot, she walked up to me with a finger wagging and said 'I know you, what did you do with the baby?' I retorted that children should be asleep at that time.

"She was convinced something horrible had happened to the baby. That's when I knew I'd pulled it off.

"I always wanted to be in film and being a copywriter for an ad agency was my way of being in film – I didn't want to be in the Nigerian film scene 'cos I didn't think it had reached the standard I needed it to be for me to be part of it."

Fabian co-owns ad agency Blue Jeans and production company 1 Take Media, and is an actor by night. That's his conscious take on his job description.

Subconsciously, he's a Pan-Africanist aspirant politician with views on the paralysis of leadership, the West and the African's psyche that continues to hold him back and enslave him.

"The movie we are shooting at the moment, *Man On The Ground*, talks to events of 2008 here in South Africa," he says. "Here we called it xenophobia, but when it happens between Christians, Muslims, Nigerians and Kenyans we call it

some blacks would have found another reason to kill each other – our calling it xenophobia gives it an elevated status. It is self-hate.

"All of Africa has this problem; we can't always blame colonialism. It's our inability to redefine ourselves (outside of that colonialism that perpetuates the cycle).

"For instance, Nigeria was given its name by a mistress of colonial head Flora Shaw. That just goes to show how Africans have allowed others to define who they are.

"South Africa and Sudan today are the only countries I can think of on the continent that have tried to redefine themselves after colonial rule. South Africa could have kept the homelands but chose not to."

But it is not for his political mind that Fabian is known by South Africans.

"I do a lot of social campaigns," he says.

*The It All Begins With You*, (anti-HIV campaign) is among his projects. "It's a Pan-African campaign that has a presence throughout the continent."

Fabian is not only its voice but also wrote

the script.

"I'll never leave advertising and communications," he says. "It helps me get my message across. I can't ever look at an issue and see it as isolated – things rarely are. We inhabit a political world where everything has a context."

Fabian says he loves South Africa and wants to settle down.

"My friends have long accused me of being a workaholic and I've come to realise this. So I want to slow down, maybe get married and raise a family."

He flatly refuses to divulge his age: "I don't want to be limited when I choose a girl to settle with."

Fabian recently acquired the movie and stage rights to a book by a Canadian author: "He's a friend of mine. He asked me to read his book to adapt for stage. When I read it I realised there was a movie there so we quickly secured the rights."

He's also working on a film about Wole Soyinka, to be shot early next year with Hakeem Kae-Kazim and Akin Omotoso.

"Before I get too old I want to make a film about Thomas Sankara," he says. "I want to portray a character that brings glory to an African, not your Idi Amin and Sani Abacha.

"We are a beautiful people battling for identity, but good people."

But everyone who has seen Bola Abayomi will agree he is nothing but.



## THIS & THAT

- Left his family in London to complete his schooling in Nigeria.
- Visits his mom in the UK twice a year.
- Is a psychology graduate.