

DAHLIA SCHWEITZER

**WEEK 9: ZOMBIES
(THEY ARE JUST LIKE US!)**

Discussion Questions, *Going Viral* Chapter 4

1. How did the representation of the zombie change after World War II?
2. How would the nuclear bomb impact American horror films?
3. What film inspired George Romero to make *Night of the Living Dead*?
4. The release of what is responsible for making zombies a big budget affair?
5. What is a crucial difference between the contemporary zombie and the early Haitian incarnation?

6. Which two genres most accurately depict the allegories of disaster and visions of social catastrophe that emerged during the Bush-Cheney era?
7. How does *iZombie* reinvent the zombie paradigm?
8. How are virally-created zombies different than previous zombies?
9. How are the military—and authority figures in general—often portrayed in the post-apocalypse outbreak narrative?
10. What is the significance of the frequent portrayals of failed technology in zombie narratives?

1. THE VIRAL ZOMBIE

We are not that different from—or better than—zombies.

For example, in the original *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), when Peter is asked what the zombies are, he responds, "They're us, that's all."

Dawn of the Dead, "They're Us, That's All" (Romero, 1978)
[video clip]

Similarly, in *The Walking Dead*, all humans contain the "zombie virus."

"If the early twenty-first century ushered in the viral zombie (notably in *28 Days Later*), it has also, in *The Walking Dead*, introduced the viral human."

—Kyle William Bishop

The viral human confuses distinctions between human and monster, living and dead.

Rick: "You know that when we die—we become them. You think we hide behind walls to protect us from the walking dead? Don't you get it? We are the walking dead!"
—volume four, *The Walking Dead* graphic novel

Rick and Glenn smear zombie guts on themselves to make themselves smell like zombies so that they can slip undetected through a horde of zombies.
—season one, episode two ("Guts," Nov. 7, 2010)

The Walking Dead, "Guts," Nov. 7, 2010
[video clip]

2. THE SHOPPING ZOMBIE

- In 1974, Romero was invited to visit the Monroeville Mall
- Romero noted the bliss of the consumers
- His friend jokingly suggested that someone would be able to survive in the mall should an emergency ever occur
- With this inspiration, Romero began to write the screenplay

Dawn of the Dead

- critique of consumerism
- zombies wander around the mall, arms outstretched, feet shuffling to the Musak
- why are they there? "Some kind of instinct. Memory of what they used to do. This was an important place in their lives." — Stephen Andrews, *Dawn of the Dead*
- the four human inhabitants convert their area in the mall into a plush apartment, taking all they need and want.
- in one scene, Peter and Roger run through the mall to pick up supplies. Once they get safely inside JCPenney, Roger asks "How are we gonna get back?" to which Peter replies, "Who the hell cares? Let's go shopping first!"

1973–75

- recession marked the end of the postwar boom
- continued growth of capitalism based on a massive expansion of credit
- Americans introduced to the modern shopping mall
- credit cards became more widely available

***Dawn of the Dead* Trailer (1978)**
[video clip]

3. THE SMARTPHONE ZOMBIE

- loss of technology = tipping point
- turns urban center into dystopian wasteland
- sends us back to the natural world
- protagonists forced to get by in a world we thought we had captured and controlled
- after the apocalypse: no electricity, computers, televisions, or information networks
- lack of control over the environment, nature, or the world around us

- especially significant because technology is so tied to contemporary life and social interaction
- we depend on technology so much that it turns us into metaphorical zombies

**WHAT'S THE POINT OF BEING AFRAID
OF THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE**



WHEN YOU'RE ALREADY A ZOMBIE?

Shaun of the Dead (Wright, 2004) emphasizes:

- the seeming equivalence between actual zombies and those of us on handheld devices or trudging through repetitive labor
- the zombifying characteristics of working-class life
- the lack of individuality inherent in modern day life
- the mind-numbing repetition that consumes much of our daily routines
- we may already be partially zombified

It is not only low-wage work that turns us into zombies but modern life, itself.

Fred Botting compares zombies to symptoms of “modern mechanical processes,” with living labor having the life sucked out of it, “rendering workers the mere appendages—puppets, automata—to the mechanisms of production.”

Steve Beard describes zombies as the “disenfranchised underclass of the material world.”

Shaun of the Dead Intro Sequence (2004)
[video clip]

***Shaun of the Dead* Final Sequence (2004)**
[video clip]

It is not that we will one day turn into zombies, but that we have already become them.



(CW, 2015-present)





Olivia "Liv" Moore (Rose McIver)



Ravi Chakrabarti (Rahul Kohli)

The modern zombie terrifies because no singular agent acts to possess the victim's mind.



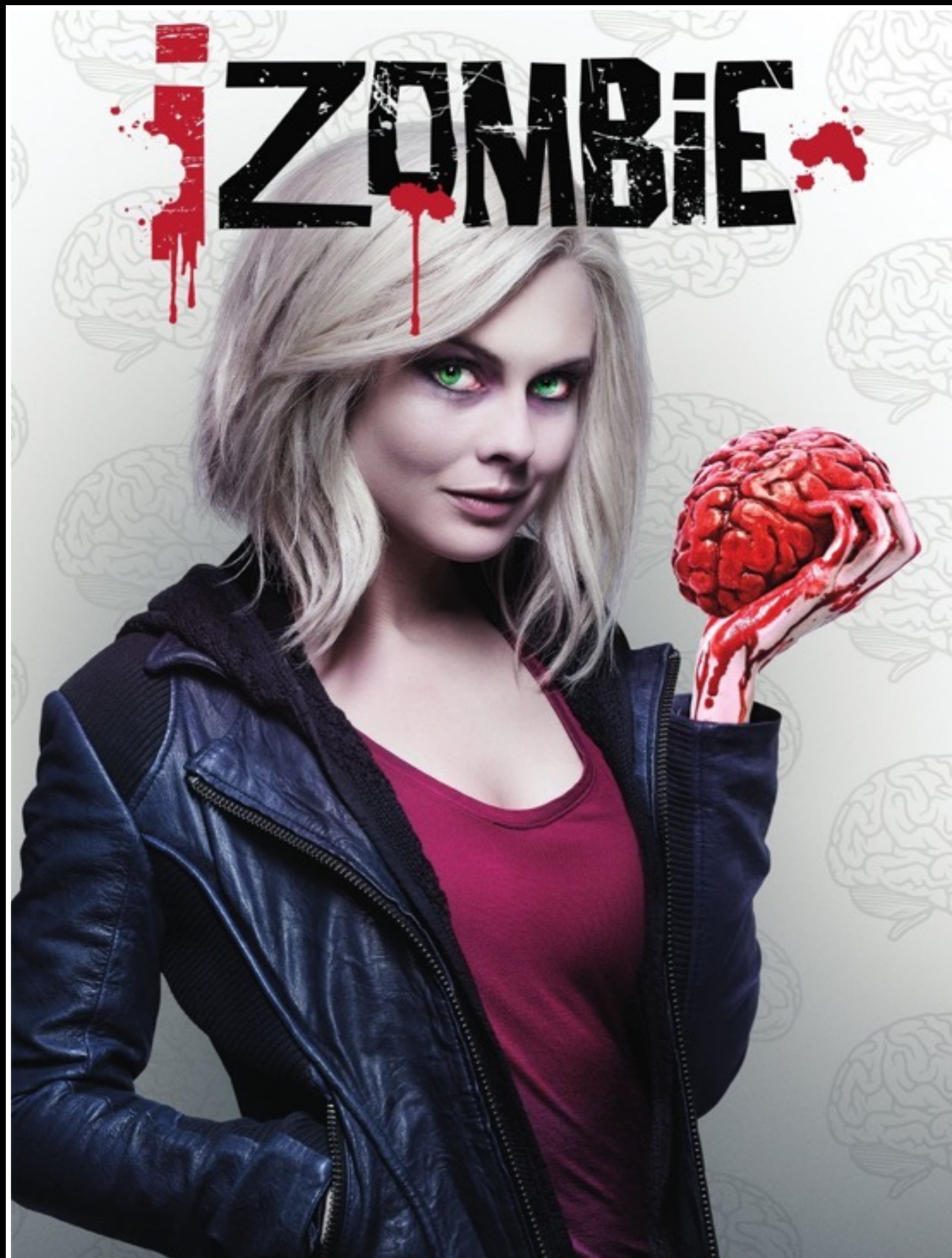
“Generally regressive and reactionary.”
—Ian Olney



Michonne (Danai Gurira)



Carol (Melissa McBride)





Cindy Sherman



THE NEW JOB

Asst. M.E.





Moore with Clive Babineaux (Malcolm Goodwin)

"There were so many nights I could have been with Major that I stayed home studying. Days I could have spent sucking the marrow out of life, I spent building a resume for a life I'd never have. There were parts of me that were dead even before I became a zombie. So maybe that means it's possible for parts of me to spring to life, even now that I'm dead."

—Olivia Moore



Cecily Strong (SNL)

“I’m just a nag, and I’m not old enough to play the nag. You have to be 28 for that. I’m somewhere between 18 and 27, but I date 40 and up—the fatter the better.”

—One-Dimensional Female Character From A Male-Driven Comedy (SNL)

"I'm always Britney, but sometimes I'm 'Hit-Me-One-More-Time' Britney, and sometimes I'm 'Shaved-Head-Smashing-Car-Windows' Britney."

—Olivia Moore

“Female characters in pop fiction rarely get to be full, complex people.”

—Jos Truitt, Executive Director of *Feministing*

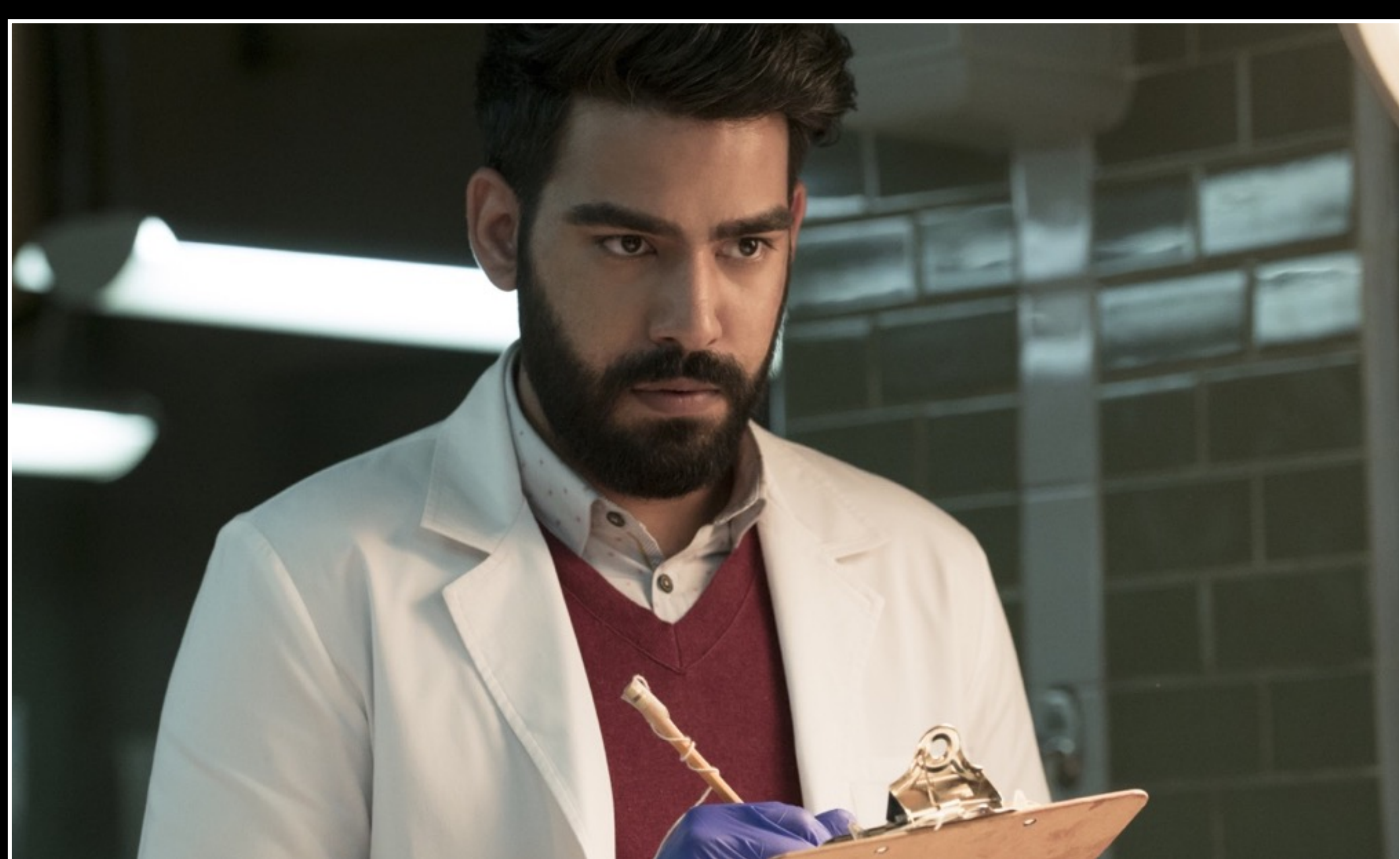
“Women as a collective force have not yet challenged us in film and television...We haven’t yet been truly asked to accept women as fully active, autonomous erratic beings within the cinematic sphere.”

—Kat George

"There was no debating whether or not he was the one. I didn't worry I'd get bored of being with the same person year after year. He was it for me. I thought I'd spend the rest of my life with Major. And I guess I did. But apparently my death is a new chapter. Bizarre as that may be."

—Olivia Moore





Condoms will not protect against the transmission of the zombie virus because it is "a hundredth the size of a typical virus." —Ravi Chakrabarti



Olivia Moore and Major Lilywhite (Robert Buckley)



**"THERE ARE ZOMBIES IN THIS WORLD...
I'M ONE OF THEM."**



iZombie pilot (CW, March 25, 2015)
[play episode]