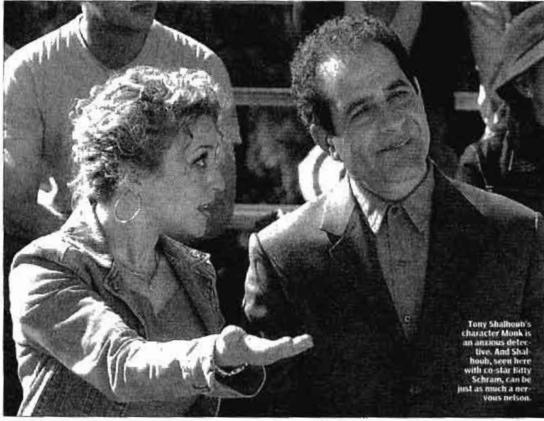
## REALLY BIG SHOW

## Monk **Getting to be a habit**



ONY Shalhoub is plagued by anxious moments almost as much as Monk, the obsessive-compulsive detective he plays on the hit USA series.

Take the most recent Golden Giobe Awards, where Shalboub won Best Actor in a Drama series.

"It's very, very different when you watch these things on IV as opposed to being there," says Shalhoub, the 49-year-old former co-star of the longrunning sitcom "Wings."

'Once you're there, there seem to be a lot of people making an enormous fuss over everyone who's walking down the red carpet. Then, once you're inside the roum, it's even more surreal - you can't look in any direction without your gaze falling on somebody enormous.

"And then to actually stand up there in from of them and speak your own words is terrifying really."

Though everyone likes to think they can play it cool and that it's really about the work and it's really just an honor to be nominated. Shalhoub admits he got caught up in the moment.

"You can't help it," says Shalhoub, who's also known for roles in "Big Night," Spy Kids" and "Men in Black."

"As soon as they begin to announce

your category, your heart starts to pump really hard and you think you might just 5lack out. Then you'te hoping they're going to announce your name, and you're dreading it at the same time because, if they do announce it, that means you have to stand up and say something coherent."

Shalhoub also had to be coherent when he gave the commencement address at alma mater (the University of Maine at Portland) just a few weeks ago

"That was another surprising thing since I don't remember doing that well in college. Apparently they changed their opinion of me."

Shalhoub spoke about uncertainty be-cause he didn't want to fill the graduates with false hope.

Yet uncertainty is exactly what "Monk" has avoided. Its second-season opener drew very good reviews, and a record number of viewers for a basic cable acripted series — a trick shows like "The Shield have been unable to pull off.

Clearly, with 16 shows in the works up from the first season's 12 - "Monk" is in it for the long haul. Not that Shalhoub has taken it for

granted "That whole couple of weeks approaching the premiere was filled with anxiety,"

he says. "You want some assurance the first season wasn't a fluke, that the novcity hasn't worn off and all of that."

Shalhoub, who is married to actress Brooke Adams and has two daughters, leves the shorter schedule of a cable show the would have said no to a major network series). In just 16 shows, it's easier for the writers to maintain the quirky quality of a drama that's filled with humorous bits and classic chemistry be-tween Monk and his Girl Friday Sturona, the terrific Bitty Schram.

With the new episodes - such as Monk's recent trip to Mexicu and Friday's show set in the world of baseball - proving they've really fut their stride, it won't be a surprise if Shalhoub faces more tense moments when the Framy nominations are announced in mid-July.

Meanwhile, he had to find somewhere to place that unexpected Golden Globe.

"It's on the mantle next to my daugh-ter's baseball trophy," Shalhoub says. "Ironically, her baseball trophy is taller than the Golden Globe. It's shimer, too. I'm not sure what that's about."

- Michael Gilta

Monk Friday, 10 p.m., USA