

# Playing Doctor

A Chicago actor scores a dream gig—and gets to shoot in his hometown.

| By Jessica Radloff | Photography by Brian Bowen Smith |

Early in season one, when Evanston native Zach Gilford was shooting *Friday Night Lights*, co-star Kyle Chandler leaned over and said, “Enjoy this. You’re never going to have another job like it.” At the time, Gilford, now 30, didn’t quite understand the sentiment. “I was thinking, ‘What, aren’t all jobs like this?’”

Fortunately for Gilford, lightning sometimes strikes twice—at least when it comes to logistics. His new drama, *The Mob Doctor* (Fox, premieres Sept. 17), films entirely in Chicago. (It also features Jordana Spiro, who co-starred in the Chicago-set series *My Boys*.) “It’s like playing make-believe in a place you’ve lived for 20 years. It’s surreal,” he says. “I got an apartment in the West Loop, which is the coolest new area.”

As Gilford knows, shooting a one-hour drama—even in one’s hometown—doesn’t leave much time for dining or socializing. “Now

everyone says, ‘I know you’re in town, so when are you coming over for dinner?’” he laughs.

If he’s lucky, he won’t have much time for dinner. FOX is betting that *The Mob Doctor* will be a bona fide hit. Gilford plays a doctor who is involved with Spiro’s character—a doctor who must work for the mob as the price of keeping her family safe. “My character starts to get suspicious of hers, and since my character’s family is involved in Chicago politics, their big platform is getting rid of the mob,” he says. “There’s definitely a Romeo and Juliet aspect to it.”

In real life, the actor is set to marry actress and Chicago native Kiele Sanchez in December. The wedding is in California, but “we’ve talked about shipping Lou Malnati’s as a late-night snack. Though that’s what we’re most worried about in Chicago. Getting fat!” If *The Mob Doctor*’s prognosis is good, it’ll be a nice problem to have.

## Gilford's Hots

*Maude's Liquor Bar, Untitled, Perennial Virant, Arami, Blackbird, the White Sox, the Bulls, Derrick Rose*

## Gilford's Nots

*Cars backed up on the 90/94, the Cubs, New Trier High School (“my rival”), no carpool lanes, delays at O’Hare*

**HOMETOWN HERO**  
Evanston native Zach Gilford stars in the new series *The Mob Doctor*, which is based and filmed in Chicago.

