

'The Cape': James Frain behaving badly after 'True Blood' and 'Tron: Legacy'

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James Frain as Chess on "The Cape" (NBC)

With the new NBC series **"The Cape,"** actor **James Frain** is starting off the new year in villainy — but that's a familiar mode for the 42-year-old British actor after his leering bloodsucker work on **"True Blood"** and digital henchman duty in **"Tron: Legacy."**

Frain was a scene-stealer on **"True Blood"** as the depraved, unhinged vampire **Franklin Mott** and he brought a sinister, sycophantic vibe to the **"Tron"** sequel as **Jarvis**, the evil underling who tries to curry favor with the film's bad guy, **CLU**, even as he plots his own path to power. Now, with the Sunday night premiere of **"The Cape,"** the actor takes on a fullblown supervillain as **Chess** — a billionaire by day, psychotic killer by night.

"It's a sophisticated idea of someone who doesn't have superpowers but has a *very* focused strategy," Frain said of Chess, who is a master strategist and manipulator and, like a grandmaster, is continually searching for his next great opponent.

Frain's character and his machinations are the starting point of the show's new superhero mythology — it's Chess who plots to frame police detective **Vince Faraday** (played by Aussie actor **David Lyons**) as a murderer, leading to the cop's disgrace, "death" and decision to become the mysterious vigilante known as the Cape. The Cape has (you guessed it) a memorable and multifunctional cape while Chess wears a body-suit costume as well as some creepy contact lenses with pupils shaped like chess pieces. Frain got a kick out of the reaction his look got from cast and crew on the set.



James Frain (Valerie Macon/Getty Images)