

IMTA ALUM BRANDON ROUTH IS *THE ATOM*

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Arrow's "Nanda Parbat" episode airs February 25th, *The Flash*'s "All-Star Team-Up" airs March 17th

Since IMTA alum Brandon Routh joined the cast of The CW's "*Arrow*" for the hit show's third season, fans have been wondering when his character, Ray Palmer—a mega-rich, technological genius who lives his life with a secret desire for heroism following the murder of his wife—would transition into his superhero alter-ego, The Atom.



In the DC Comic world, it is no secret that the transition will happen; it was just a question of when since his desire to build a suit and clean up the city is the main thing Routh's character has been discussing for several weeks. Well, the wait is finally over as The Atom debuts in "*Arrow*'s" 15th episode of the season entitled "Nanda Parbat."

According to the original DC comic book story created by writer Gardner Fox and illustrator Gil Kane in 1961, Ray Palmer, Ph.D., is a physicist and professor at Ivy University in New England, specializing in matter compression as a means to fight overpopulation, famine and other world problems. Using a mass of white dwarf star matter he finds after it lands on Earth, Palmer fashions a lens that enables him to shrink any object—including himself—to any degree he wishes. The CW's version of Ray Palmer creates the Atom suit that is really at the cutting edge of technology, both in the real world and on the show. According to "*Arrow*" executive producer Marc Guggenheim, "[Ray]'s going to have to discover that a super suit does not a hero make. Part of the thing that we're always trying to be true to is putting on a costume is the easy part. It's being the hero that's the really difficult part and one does not mean you've accomplished the other."

How Palmer becomes a superhero is, of course, the heart of his story. "We start to understand why he's doing what he's doing...you understand on a deeper level that he's not here just because he's a playboy billionaire wanting to make a cool suit, fight crime and wanting to be a hero," Routh said. "He felt helpless and he couldn't help the woman he loved most in the world. He's there to defend her honor and her memory and everyone else out there who's helpless and needs a hand, he's there to be the savior."



On the heels of The Atom joining *Arrow* to take on crime, a major cross-over episode places Ray Palmer/The Atom on "*Arrow*" spin-off "*The Flash*" for the highly-rated show's 18th episode of its first season. In the episode, Palmer and co-worker/potential love interest Felicity (Emily Bett Rickards) seek the help of STAR Labs to increase the capabilities of The Atom exosuit. The Atom will face off in Central City with villain Bug-Eyed Bandit (Emily Kinney from "*The Walking Dead*").

With this major escalation of Ray Palmer/The Atom storyline, the DC Comic world is all abuzz with news of a possible spin-off show of his own for Routh as The Atom. "*Arrow*" and "*The Flash*" executive producer Greg Berlanti has confirmed that he is in early talks about an Atom spin-off, adding: "We just love this universe and we want to keep growing it. We are trying to do more of what we enjoy, and it's true: the shows are plentiful with characters and storylines. There's a region of the universe that we felt like we haven't dealt with yet that we'd like to deal with."

Also on Routh's schedule this spring is the scheduled release of the sci-fi thriller *400 Days*, in which he stars alongside Tom Cavanagh, Dane Cook, Ben Feldman, Cathy Lotz and Grant Bowler. The film centers on four astronauts sent on a simulated mission to a distant planet to test the psychological effects of deep space travel. Locked away for 400 days, the crew's mental state begins to deteriorate when they lose all communication with the outside world. Forced to exit the ship, they discover that this mission may not have been a simulation after all.