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star in *WandaVision*, the Disney+
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Courting Disorder

Bryan Cranston
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**A Half-
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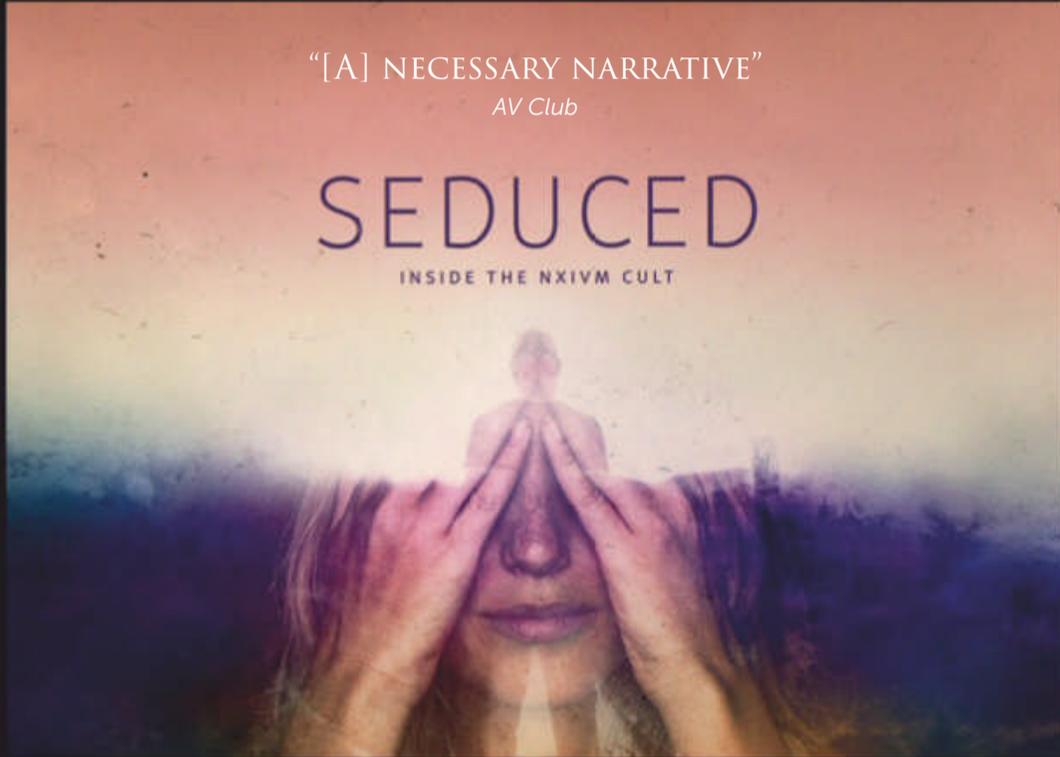
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As I look back on 2020, I am enormously proud of what the Television Academy has achieved under challenging circumstances. Amid a nationwide call for social justice and a pandemic that has affected every aspect of our lives, the combined efforts of our board, committees, staff and members, as well as our media and corporate partners, have led to extraordinary accomplishments.

In a year that turned out to be virtually all-virtual, it seems fitting that in January — when the coming pandemic was barely on our radar — we kicked off our first all-streaming FYC season. Having decided last year to stop

distributing DVD screeners — to reduce costs for our industry partners and to give the planet a much-needed break — this spring we launched a state-of-the-art viewing platform where voters could stream all entries.

And the entries poured in. Between February, when we opened the online Emmy entry process, and June, when the entry period closed, we logged a record number of submissions — 16 percent more than ever.

By July, we were ready as usual to announce the nominations and did so in, yes, a virtual ceremony. With our high-energy host, Leslie Jones — and presenters Laverne Cox, Josh Gad and Tatiana Maslany — this early-morning event was much-viewed and talked about. And over the coming weeks, we honored the nominees at a series of virtual get-togethers, where members shared pre-Emmy excitement.

During this time, we also produced the first virtual Los Angeles Area Emmy Awards, which led to our next big event: the Creative Arts Emmys. This extravaganza played out over five nights in September, culminating in a Saturday telecast on FXX.

Then, our night of nights — the 72nd Emmy Awards telecast — aired as scheduled, on September 20 on ABC. While host Jimmy Kimmel kept his cool — and kept the jokes coming — for three hours onstage at L.A.'s Staples Center, an elite production team managed some 140 feeds from around the world. The result was a crowd-pleaser that raised the technological bar for live, global television.

The Emmys also raised funds for a critical cause — the fight against childhood hunger — with the Academy and the night's award-winning broadcast and streaming partners donating to the No Kid Hungry campaign. The Academy made donations as well to the Actors Fund Covid-19 relief fund and to our own Foundation, for its programs that preserve television's history while educating the young people who will shape its future.

While all this was unfolding, most of the Academy staff had transitioned to work-from-home. That gave us the opportunity to install some health and safety measures at our North Hollywood, California, headquarters, such as a touchless entry system.

In the meantime, we have maintained all of our usual member services — and even added more. We have kept members informed through virtual peer group meetings and all-Academy discussions. We have completed a redesign of TelevisionAcademy.com while also reaching out via social media. And you may have noticed a new series of essays and videos on our website, called "In My Opinion." In this forum, we hope that members of underrepresented groups will continue to share their voices.

In that spirit of inclusion, we have also engaged a diversity consultant to assess our leadership, membership and staff and make recommendations to increase representation.

And the magazine you are now reading, *emmy*, added an edition to its annual publication schedule, expanding editorial content as well as marketing opportunities during the busy FYC period.

This is a partial list of our 2020 accomplishments, and as I review it, I am humbled by what we've done together. I am also filled with enthusiasm for the year ahead. Challenges remain, but I am confident that the Academy and our industry will continue to meet them and that we will all emerge stronger and smarter on the other side.

Frank Scherma
Chairman and CEO
Television Academy

THE MAGAZINE OF
THE TELEVISION ACADEMY
televisionacademy.com

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FROM SHONDALAND,
WHO BROUGHT YOU
GREY'S ANATOMY AND SCANDAL

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BRIDGERTON



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The Marvel Cinematic Universe comes to television with *WandaVision*, the new Disney+ series that places a super-powered Elizabeth Olsen and Paul Bettany in the suburbs of classic sitcoms. Alternative reality? Social experiment? One thing's for sure, says Marvel's Kevin Feige: "An experience like *WandaVision* is something you can't get in a movie." By Mara Reinstein
Photographs by Ricky Middlesworth

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An actor-producer who knows how good guys can stray to the dark side, Bryan Cranston confronts a new crisis of conscience in Showtime's *Your Honor*. Offscreen, he maintains his moral compass. "All the great ones have a humility and this... work ethic," says his pal Vince Gilligan. "Once you start coasting, you've lost it. He'll never lose it because he's never going to be that guy." By Mike Flaherty

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Even in the streaming age, Americans who savor the best in British drama are still gathering 'round the telly as the weekend wanes. Appointment viewing since 1971, PBS's *Masterpiece* — home of *Downton Abbey*, *Sherlock* and so much more — enters its second half-century with its renowned commitment to stories that, in the words of its executive producer, explore "emotional truth and the great themes of life." By Jacqueline Cutler

62 Scene Stealer

To portray Margaret Thatcher in *The Crown*, Gillian Anderson had to immerse herself in Britain's "Iron Lady," both mentally and physically. The strong-willed prime minister is "the toughest role I have ever played," reports the actress, who promises, "You still see it's me playing her" — underneath that famous halo of '80s hair. By Benji Wilson

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Nena Erb, ACE



On the cover: Paul Bettany and Elizabeth Olsen photographed for emmy by Ricky Middlesworth

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ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY



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THE TIMES



THE
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Alex Trebek



"Welcome to America's favorite answer-and-question game — Jeopardy!," announced Alex Trebek in September 1984, when the game was revived as a syndicated show and he became the new host. "You know how we play it. We provide the categories and the answers, and then it's up to our contestants to give us the right questions."

Player Greg Hopkins selected "Animals" for \$100, and Trebek read: "These rodents first got to America by stowing away on ships." Hopkins entered game-show history books by giving the new show's first correct response: "What are rats?"

And thus *Jeopardy!* began its new lease on life, and Trebek began a record-setting thirty-seven-season run as its beloved leader. He died November 8, following a two-year battle with pancreatic cancer, which he had disclosed in March 2019.

Trebek, who had been contracted to host *Jeopardy!* through 2022, won the Daytime Emmy as Outstanding Game Show Host seven times, and was nominated another twenty-four times.

Meanwhile, his fame rebounded across pop culture: Will Ferrell's impression of him was a *Saturday Night Live* staple (though Trebek was said to have preferred Eugene Levy's *SCTV* version), and in a 1997 episode of *The Simpsons*, when Marge landed a spot on *Jeopardy!*, Trebek — voicing himself — demanded that she pay back the \$5,200 she'd lost. He also appeared as himself in a 1998 episode of *Baywatch*, as a fictional game show host in a 2010 episode of *How I Met Your Mother*, and on a 2018 episode of *RuPaul's Drag Race*, where he read drag-related clues.

He was working until the week before his death, and the remaining episodes of *Jeopardy!* that he taped will run through January 8.

—Eds., with reporting by Barry Garron

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**“ONE OF
THE BEST
SHOWS OF
THE YEAR.”**

● **USA TODAY**

**“A BEAUTIFUL
LOOKING
PRODUCTION.”**

The Boston Globe

**“GORGEOUSLY
SHOT.”**

**THE
PLAYLIST**

**“NOT ONLY
INVITING,
BUT GRIPPING
TO WATCH.**

Anya Taylor-Joy
delivers one of the
best performances
of the year.”

IndieWire



**“THE KIND
OF PRESTIGE
DRAMA TV
DOESN'T MAKE
ANYMORE.”**

TIME

**“A JEWEL
OF A
SERIES.”**

VANITY FAIR

**“SUPERB
PERFORMANCES.”**

RollingStone

**“SMART,
LAVISHLY
PRODUCED
TELEVISION.
Anya Taylor-Joy
shines in a tour de
force performance.”**

**THE
HOLLYWOOD
REPORTER**

**“IT'S ANCHORED BY A MAGNETIC LEAD PERFORMANCE
AND BOLSTERED BY WORLD-CLASS ACTING.**

Anya Taylor-Joy gives the kind of performance that only becomes
more riveting the longer you sit with it. A triumph.”

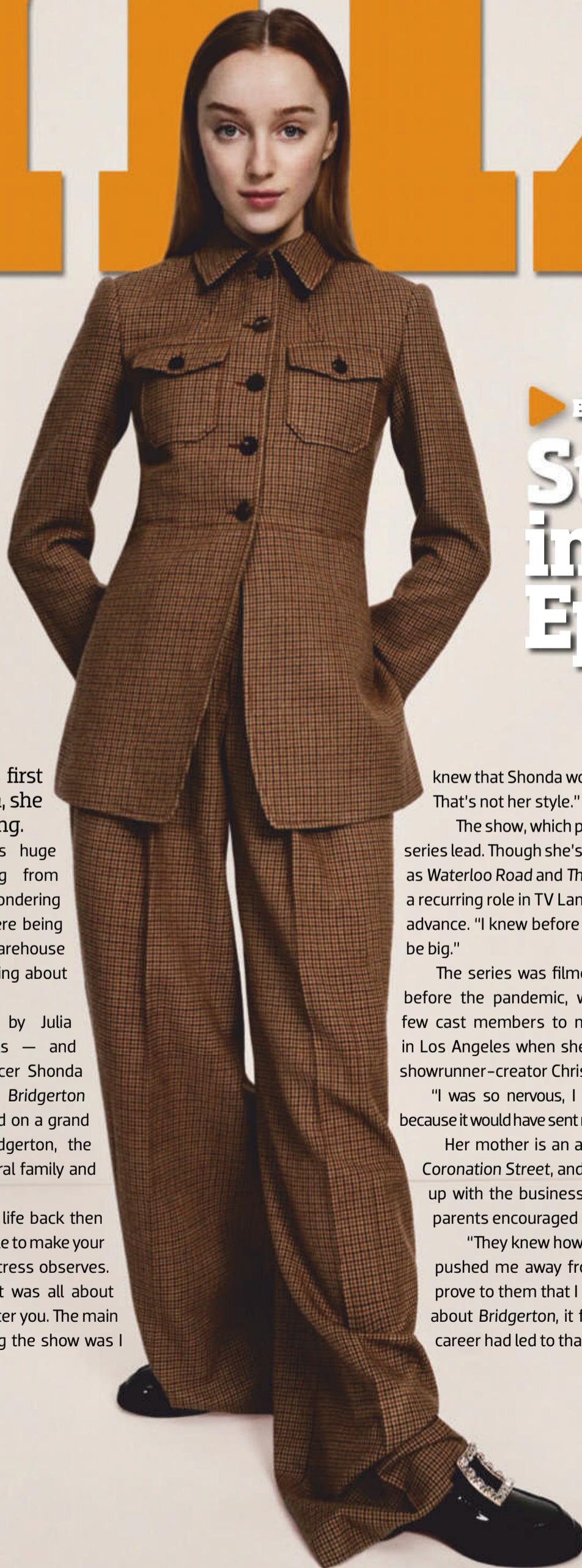
👍 RogerEbert.com

THE
QUEEN'S GAMBIT

N

FYC.NETFLIX.COM

in the



▶ **BIO PICK**

Stepping into an Epic

When Phoebe Dynevor was first cast as the lead in *Bridgerton*, she was taken for a costume fitting.

"I remember getting to this huge warehouse," she says, speaking from London, "and walking through, wondering where the *Bridgerton* costumes were being kept. Then I realized that the whole warehouse was just for this one show. Everything about *Bridgerton* is epic."

A ten-part series inspired by Julia Quinn's historical romance novels — and the first Netflix series from producer Shonda Rhimes's company, Shondaland — *Bridgerton* is a reimagining of Regency England on a grand scale. Dynevor plays Daphne Bridgerton, the eldest daughter of the show's central family and thus first in line to be married off.

"The most striking thing about life back then [in the early 1800s] was not being able to make your own decisions as a woman," the actress observes. "There was no career for you — it was all about finding a husband who could look after you. The main reason I was so excited about doing the show was I

knew that Shonda wouldn't let the women be without agency. That's not her style."

The show, which premieres December 25, is Dynevor's first series lead. Though she's been working in British productions such as *Waterloo Road* and *The Village* since she was fourteen and has a recurring role in TV Land's *Younger*, this role marks a significant advance. "I knew before going in," she says, "that it was going to be big."

The series was filmed in the U.K. and wrapped in February, before the pandemic, which meant Dynevor was one of the few cast members to meet Rhimes in person. She was living in Los Angeles when she won the part, so she met Rhimes and showrunner-creator Chris Van Dusen at a chemistry read.

"I was so nervous, I almost had to pretend she wasn't there because it would have sent me askew," Dynevor recalls. "I'm such a fan."

Her mother is an actress on the long-running British soap *Coronation Street*, and her father is a TV writer, so she's grown up with the business all around her. That doesn't mean her parents encouraged her to follow their lead.

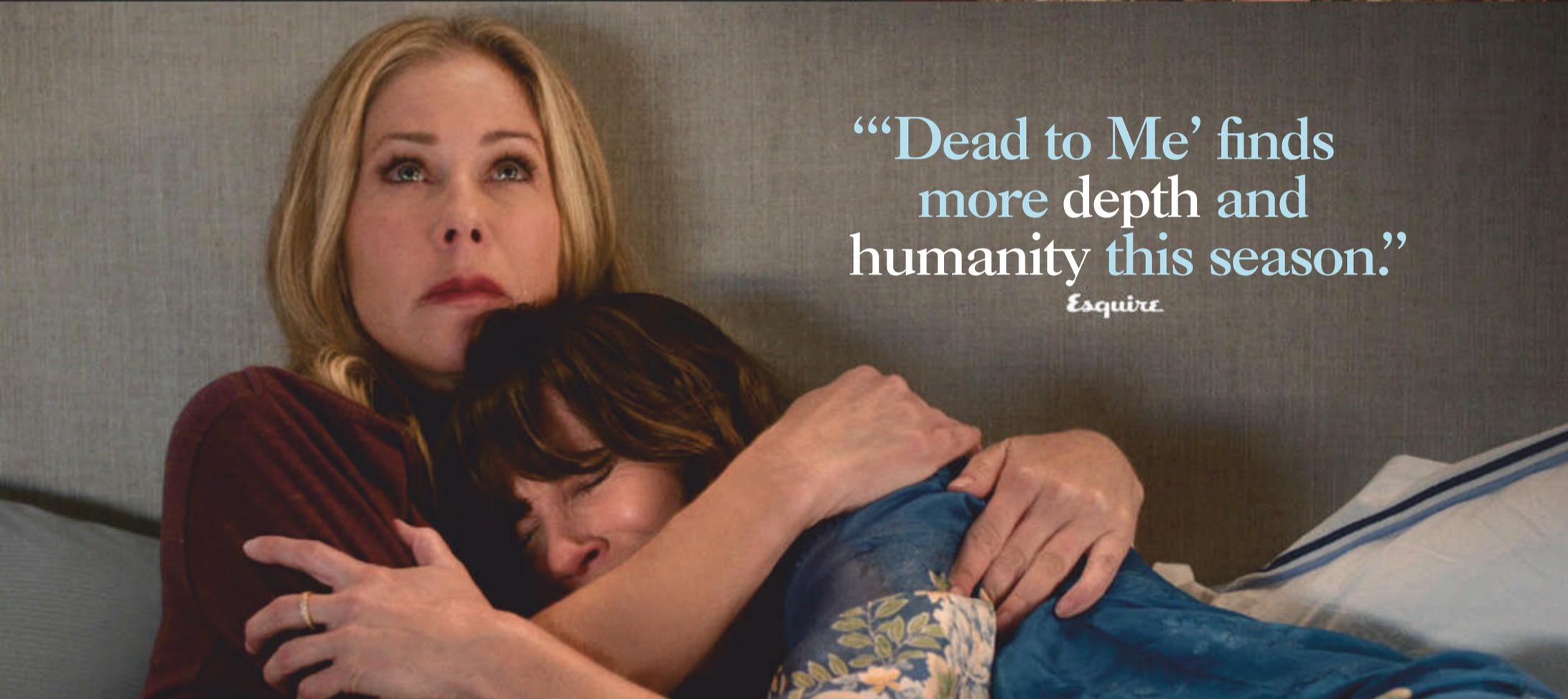
"They knew how tough the industry is," she recalls. "They pushed me away from it. In my teenage years I wanted to prove to them that I really wanted to do it. When I got the call about *Bridgerton*, it felt as though everything I'd done in my career had led to that moment." —Benji Wilson

“A brilliant season
of television.”

BuzzFeed

“This season is perfect.
Christina Applegate
and Linda Cardellini
are a heavenly pair.”

THE
NEW YORKER



“‘Dead to Me’ finds
more depth and
humanity this season.”

Esquire



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Dead to Me



FYC.NETFLIX.COM

"The purpose of comedy is to make you laugh, but good comedy will make you think and feel as well," Thomas Middleditch says. And that's just what he's doing on *B Positive*, Chuck Lorre and Marco Pennette's new CBS sitcom about an almost-divorced dad who gets a new lease on life when his renal failure unites him with an unlikely donor.

"The only person who agrees to donate her kidney is this whirlwind mess of a woman he knew in high school," Middleditch explains. And even as his cranky Drew tries to help ground Annaleigh Ashford's wild Gina, she's opening his world and teaching him to, well, be positive.

Growing up in Nelson, British Columbia, Middleditch wasn't exactly a comedy kid. "I was a weirdo that got bullied," he says. "So I watched movies where tough guys 'didn't take no crap.'" Then he stumbled into improv and found a weapon more powerful than Van Damme and Stallone combined. "The minute you become the funny guy, the bullies realize you have a use in their society of terror and you kind of get a pass."

Comedy led him to Chicago's improv scene, which led

to TV and movie roles and, in 2016, an Emmy nomination for *Silicon Valley*. The HBO series, which wrapped last year, was "a special thing," Middleditch says. "It was helmed by legends like Mike Judge and Alec Berg, and it's rare that you show up to set on day one and not only know the people, but have worked with them for years. That was the case for a lot of us."

Next, Middleditch returned to his roots and went on tour with Ben Schwartz (*Parks and Recreation*). Their long-form improv, which was taped for Netflix's *Middleditch & Schwartz*, "is my Patronus of comedy," he cracks, referring to a spirit-animal charm familiar to Harry Potter fans. "If I could do that with Ben for the rest of my career, I would be so happy." Meanwhile, his voice work as Terry on *Solar Opposites* streams on Hulu.

And now, Middleditch is reveling in multi-cam comedy on *B Positive*. Having shot the pilot in front of a studio audience before Covid upended production, he is looking forward to working before live viewers again. For now, he's thrilled *B Positive* is airing in CBS's coveted Thursday night lineup.

"I hope people dig it and have fun," he says. "As if we don't all need a positive show right now, right? Give us the good vibes!" —Deanna Barnert

► **BIO PICK**

Donor Party



F O R Y O U R C O N S I D E R A T I O N

"A TRIUMPHANT RETURN.

THE SERIES' STRONGEST RUN YET.
LAURA LINNEY AND JASON BATEMAN
DELIVER DYNAMITE PERFORMANCES."

INDIEWIRE

"INTENSE.

AS THE DANGER RISES,
SO DOES
THE BRILLIANCE."

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

OZARK



FYC.NETFLIX.COM

Tracking the Traffickers

For her new Nat Geo series, a gutsy journalist gains access to black markets.



Mariana van Zeller conducting interviews in Jamaica.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/MUCK MEDIA

When Mariana van Zeller is pursuing a hot lead, she rarely takes no for an answer.

To persuade members of the Jalisco cartel to open up about their gun-smuggling operations, she boards a speedboat with masked men, who escort her to a remote beach in Baja California for a tête-à-tête. They'd warned her that if they discovered she was working for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, they would take her out.

"In that situation, I was very nervous," says van Zeller, who is executive producer and correspondent for National Geographic's *Trafficked with Mariana van Zeller*. The eight-episode series — now airing and already renewed for a second season — explores various black markets and trafficking networks that involve cocaine, fentanyl, counterfeit money, scamming, tiger-smuggling, pimps and steroids.

For the latter, we meet Anthony "Dr. Tony Huge" Hughes, a bankruptcy attorney-turned-bodybuilder who's pumped with performance-enhancing drugs and charisma. He's charming, even as he injects a young bodybuilder's arm with a substance that could have a fatal effect. Intent on winning the Mr. Olympia contest, the young man is willing to take that risk.

In the episode "Titans of Scam," van Zeller zeroes in on a mammoth scamming industry in Jamaica that's aimed primarily at foolhardy Americans who want to believe they've won a multimillion-dollar lottery out of the blue. She wheedles her way inside the phone-bank operation, showing us rows of callers in tiny cubicles as they chat up their targets, whom they term "lonely

Americans." Many of the scammers are just scraping by, and some justify their activities as reparations for slavery.

Van Zeller says that if you don't understand who and what's driving black markets, you'll never stop them. "I wanted viewers to realize that people working in these shadowy worlds are a lot more like us than we know."

Born and raised in Portugal, she knew by age twelve that she wanted to be a journalist. She was so determined to attend Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, she applied three times before being accepted.

A month after she arrived in New York, 9/11 occurred and a Portuguese TV network enlisted her to deliver breaking news on-camera. That's when van Zeller realized she didn't want to be a talking head — she wanted to be on the street chasing the story. "I wanted to report on why things happen and to dig deeper."

Her documentary *Death by Fentanyl* won an Alfred I. duPont–Columbia University Award and another of her docs, *The OxyContin Express*, earned a Peabody Award and an Emmy nomination. She has also hosted the Travel Channel's *Breaking Borders* with chef Michael Voltaggio.

Armed with a winning smile, easy rapport and fluency in five languages, van Zeller wedges her foot in doors that would slam in other people's faces. "People realize I'm authentically interested in their stories," she says. "I like to approach journalism with empathy."

That attitude helps during a furtive meeting with a Jamaican scammer. He divulges that he was considering robbing her and her crew but changed his mind. "You're a very cool kid," he tells her. "I like you." —Ann Farmer

FROM THE CO-CREATOR OF AMERICAN HORROR STORY

“★★★★★

SARAH PAULSON
IS WONDERFULLY POISED.”

BBC

“SARAH PAULSON
DOES COMPELLING WORK.”

THE BOSTON GLOBE

“THE VISUALS ARE
SUMPTUOUS.”

DAILY BEAST

“GORGEOUSLY MADE.”

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

“STUNNING
PERFORMANCES.”

NERDIST

“THE PERFORMERS
ARE WONDERFUL.”

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

“A STYLISH
THRILL RIDE.”

THE NEW YORK TIMES

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Ratched



FYC.NETFLIX.COM

Current issues echo in *Dickinson*, a playful portrait of an artist ahead of her time.

VICTORIAN VOGUE

It seems highly unlikely that the nineteenth-century American poet Emily Dickinson ever called guys "dudes." Or that she and novelist Louisa May Alcott once went for "a run" before supper. Or that she embroidered "F*** My Life" into her needlepoint.

But in the Apple TV+ comedy *Dickinson* — from creator-writer-executive producer Alena Smith — she does all that and more.

This young, spunky Emily (Hailee Steinfeld) is freshly imagined with a Victorian wardrobe and a contemporary sensibility. She gamely winches up her heavy floor-length skirt to boogie across a field with Alcott. Her satisfaction from stringing poetic words together prompts her to jump on her

"To me, it's Emily Dickinson imagined as a rebellious goth teenager who is potentially queer or bisexual," says director Silas Howard, who, like Passon, worked on seasons one and two. "Also what I think this show does well," he says, "is draw

parallels to things that are still happening today."

In one of the episodes he directed, "I am afraid to own a Body" (all episode titles are drawn from Dickinson poetry), Dickinson and her peers, rehearsing Shakespeare's *Othello*, stake out gender-reversal roles. Emily assumes Iago. Her brother plays Desdemona. Howard sat the cast down ahead of time to ensure that the humor landed in the right spots. "I didn't want an actor playing



Hailee Steinfeld (standing center with arm raised) stars in *Dickinson*; the cast — here costumed for Shakespeare club — also includes (standing, from left) Adrian Blake Enscoe, Samuel Farnsworth, Sophie Zucker, Gus Birney, Allegra Heart and (seated) Anna Baryshnikov and Gus Halper with (kneeling, far right) Kevin Yee.

APPLE TV+

four-poster bed and rock out to electro-punk music. And when she's feeling awestruck, she blurts out the modern slang term "sick."

The first season, which won a Peabody Award, also depicted her as a progressive thinker who writes poetry against her father's objections and chafes against the societal restrictions imposed on women in the mid-1800s. "Who cares about an election? We can't even vote," she grumbles on an election day.

The second season, premiering January 8, builds on those themes while expanding her world. "It's also about how Emily deals with fame," says Stacie Passon, one of the series' directors, "and what fame does to an artist."

Dickinson only became widely known after death. She left behind almost 2,000 poems, having allowed just ten to be published during her lifetime. Ever more reclusive as she aged, she eventually spoke to most visitors while hidden behind a door. Her sexuality and intimate relations similarly remain shrouded in mystery, though some scholars suggest she was in love with her sister-in-law. This production explores that gray area.

a female role as a joke. We're not doing that."

Racism glides into view when Emily awkwardly attempts to recruit her father's worker, Henry, to play *Othello*. Henry demurs. As a Black man in this pre-Civil War period, he knows what's at stake if viewed as overstepping his place, a tension that's further explored in season two.

"I love the stories that take a risk," Howard says, "and go into uncomfortable moments that are not wrapped up with a bow."

For Passon, "The show definitely reflects some of the political struggles that we are all dealing with now." Case in point: she directed a mischievous scene in which Alcott — who hasn't yet written the hugely popular *Little Women* — comes for dinner at the Dickinsons' house. Alcott (Zosia Mamet) begins musing aloud about her concept for a female-centric family story. "Just a bunch of sisters and their mom," she remarks at the dinner table.

"Oh, that doesn't sound like a hit," another guest observes.

Passon laughs. "It's a terrific commentary on all women artists and their struggle to find stories that the general public finds relevant." —Ann Farmer

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

"WHAT A GREAT SITCOM LOOKS LIKE"

DECIDER

"FUNNY AND TENDER"

THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"A DOSE OF REAL-WORLD HUMOR"

TV INSIDER



**the
CONNERS**

WEDNESDAYS 9|8c



Updating a Stephen King classic takes audacity and subtlety. This showrunner had that and more: a new ending from the master himself.

TAKING HIS **STAND**

While shooting *The Stand* in Vancouver this past March, Benjamin Cavell started to feel a little uneasy. Here he was, making a limited series for CBS All Access out of Stephen King's famed pandemic epic just as a real-life virus was spreading. "Life," says the showrunner and executive producer, "was beginning to mirror the story we were telling."

King's 1978 story clearly needed updating. Cavell had spent a lot of time imagining how contemporary America would react to a global plague. He'd always thought the story was still relevant, but not because of the contagion threat. He thought the interesting questions would arise after the pandemic — how would we rebuild a ruined society?

In this fresh take on *The Stand*, that question still leads — as in King's story — to big issues. It's good versus evil and altruism versus fascism in the post-apocalypse: Mother Abigail (Whoopi Goldberg) gathers her democratic forces in the Boulder Free Zone, while Randall Flagg (Alexander Skarsgård) runs his authoritarian regime out of Las Vegas. The groups differ strongly on how to restructure society in the post-plague chaos and how to soothe the lingering contempt. Sound familiar?

Cavell had many discussions with Julie McNamara,



Benjamin Cavell

miniseries it inspired) didn't focus on race; only a few people of color flocked to Mother Abigail's side. In its nine episodes, the new series seeks to rectify that with diverse casting — and by swapping gender and race in some roles: the Rat Man becomes a Rat Woman (Fiona Dourif), and Ralph Brentner becomes

Ray Brentner (Native American actress Irene Bedard).

These changes aren't superficial — they alter the essence of the characters. Jovan Adepo's Larry Underwood is no longer a white musician coopting Black culture. And Mother Abigail is no longer an eye-rolling embodiment of the old "Magical Negro" storytelling trope (in which Black characters exist mainly to save white characters).

"That was the first conversation that Whoopi and I had," Cavell says. "It was one of the big challenges — to make sure Mother Abigail was a character from 2020. Yes, there is something magical about her, but she has all the flaws and contradictions of a real person."

With these and other changes, Cavell hopes that even fans of the book will find surprises throughout the series, which premiered December 17. The nonlinear timeline allows Mother Abigail's fellowship to embark



Whoopi Goldberg



Alexander Skarsgård

head of programming at CBS All Access, about how to lend nuance to all this, including establishing why Flagg's acolytes would sign up for his Sin City society. "Much of *The Stand* is about the appeal of the authoritarian," Cavell says. "What is that kind of leader offering? Flagg needed to make a compelling case."

Despite its large cast of characters, King's book (and the 1994 ABC

on a quest much earlier than in previous tellings. Easter eggs abound. Perhaps most important, King himself wrote a new ending for the series — a continuation of the story that he'd been planning for decades.

Pleased with the result, Cavell says, "We found little ways to tee up his coda, little hints sprinkled in at various points. It's a pretty intricate puzzle."
—Jennifer Vineyard

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

**“IF THERE’S ONE SHOW READY TO TACKLE THE INSANE,
UNPREDICTABLE EVENTS THAT HAVE SHAPED 2020, IT’S BLACK-ISH”**

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

**“BALANCING REAL-LIFE ISSUES AND COMEDY IS IN
BLACK-ISH’S DNA”**

TV GUIDE

“THE ENTIRE CAST IS PHENOMENAL”

BUZZFEED



black-ish

WEDNESDAYS 9:30|8:30c



signature

NELSON

For a global survey of a single summer's day, a director and his editors dig through 15,000 hours of footage.

WHAT IN THE WORLD...

There was a lot going on around the world last July 25. In New York, demonstrators marched in a Black Lives Matter protest. In Lithuania, soldiers discovered forgotten World War I graves. In South Korea, apartment dwellers witnessed a big explosion. Also, a Russian girl milked her goats, a Nigerian doctor oversaw a difficult birth and a young Italian couple made love for the first time.

We know all this — and will soon see it — because these people and thousands of others filmed the events of their day and submitted the footage to director Kevin Macdonald for the follow-up to his groundbreaking 2010 documentary, *Life in a Day*. Ridley Scott returns as executive producer.

"The whole of human life is in there," Macdonald says of the doc, which will premiere at the Sundance Film Festival (opening January 28) and then be released on YouTube. "That's the point."

The first *Life in a Day* was made to celebrate the fifth anniversary of YouTube's founding. It was an ambitious sociological experiment, a crowd-sourced time capsule of one day around the globe. Macdonald, whose *One Day in September* (about the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre) won the Best Documentary Oscar in 2000, wasn't the director in a traditional sense. Rather, he and his team assembled submissions from some 80,000 amateur filmmakers — about 4,500 hours of footage.

This time around, Macdonald and crew received nearly three times that amount and faced the daunting task of whittling it down. Only 1 percent of the 15,000 hours submitted — about 150 hours — was considered highly usable, earning at least four stars in the team's ranking system.

That was "still a hell of a lot" to sift through, Macdonald says, adding, "You can't over-intellectualize. It should feel like a snapshot: what is the

world trying to tell us?"

The message, it seems, is that there is some division out there. "People are much more anxious in America than they are anywhere else," he says. "We've been surprised that the Russians seemed to be having a lovely summer."

The juxtapositions provide strange contrasts, ranging from an American obsessing about politics to a family herding cows on a Mongolian plateau to people in cemeteries, visiting loved ones lost to Covid-19.

"Lockdown has led to a lot of introspection," says Sam Rice-Edwards, one of three main editors on the project. "It doesn't necessarily lend a darkness, but it doesn't feel as carefree as the 2010 film. That was a more innocent time."

"It might be a less joyful film," Macdonald adds, "but it's still about the joy of life and existence."

As anarchic as it may seem, *Life in a Day 2020* has a semblance of structure — recurring characters, mini-montages and arranged story arcs. "It's kind of like a symphony," Macdonald notes. "It has an emotional flow, but not a rational logic." Editor Mdhmiri Á Nkemi has been assembling a montage of people expressing love, while another, Nse Asuquo, has focused on political protests.

Still up in the air: will Macdonald himself appear? On the day in question, he shot footage of being turned away at a Turkish airport, along with "loads of people in masks feeling paranoid." But the team gave his footage only three stars.

"We'll get to the bottom of that, and they'll be punished," Macdonald jokes. "I have to make sure I get my Hitchcock moment!" —Jennifer Vineyard



Life in a Day images captured (clockwise from top left) in Iraq, Mongolia, Russia, New York and California.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

"THE BEST BROADCAST SHOW OF 2020"

REASON

"PROVOCATIVE"

NEWSDAY

"COMPELLING"

LIFE & STYLE



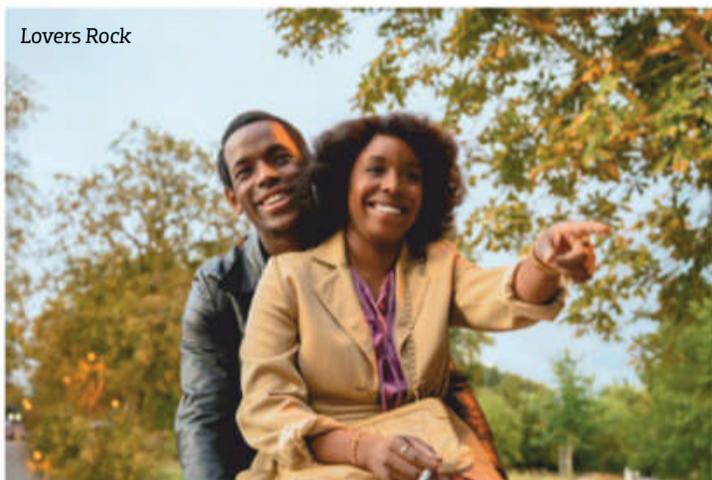
BIG SKY

TUESDAYS 10|9c





Mangrove



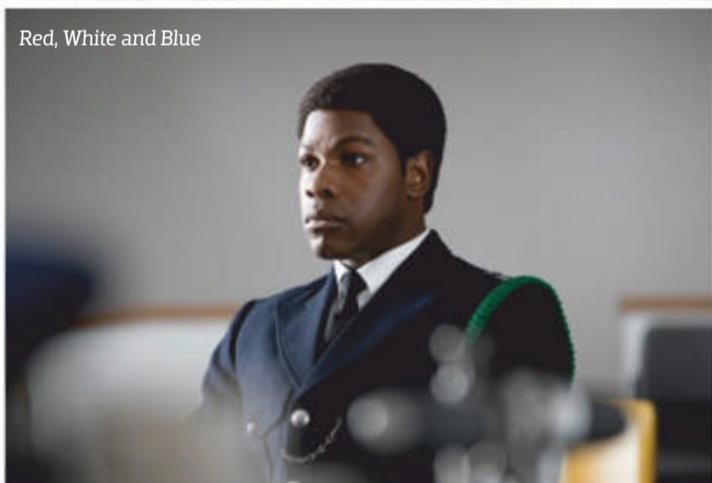
Lovers Rock



Education



Alex Wheatle



Red, White and Blue

Securing rights to the reggae for *Small Axe* was no simple task — but crucial for its distinguished director and cast, who sought to lose themselves in the music.

Lost and Found

Ed Bailie admits he was “kind of nervous” the night before he first met Oscar-winning British filmmaker and visual artist Steve McQueen (*12 Years a Slave*). “This guy is one of the greatest artists of our time,” Bailie says of his fellow Brit, who was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2011 for his achievements in visual arts and knighted in 2020 for his films.

Bailie, who’d worked at one point for a reggae music publisher, was meeting with McQueen about a music supervisor gig on *Small Axe*. The five-film anthology, which spans the late 1960s to mid-’80s, is set in London’s West Indian community, a subculture infused with a love of music, particularly reggae. All of the films — *Mangrove*, *Lovers Rock*, *Education*, *Alex Wheatle* and *Red, White and Blue* — are now streaming on Amazon Prime Video.

“I have a lot of deep reggae knowledge,” Bailie says, “so going into a room to talk about the genre isn’t something that was of concern. But going in to meet someone of such stature and fierce creativity is... nerve-wracking.”

Despite the nerves, he landed the job, working with fellow music supervisor Abi Leland. And his reggae chops were put to the test right away with *Lovers Rock*, the only work not based on a true story.

The seventy-minute film, which revolves around young love and lust at a house party, features roughly fifty minutes of cleared music, Bailie explains. McQueen, who has called the anthology “a celebration of all that that community has succeeded

in achieving against the odds,” wanted much of the music cleared before the cameras started rolling, in hopes of capturing the spirit of a party in 1979.

“It had to have complete accuracy,” Bailie says. “Steve wanted the music playing on set. It allowed for moments of fluid creativity, and Steve could ex-

perience the moment and get the response from the cast as it happened. You can really transport yourself into the space of the party.”

One of Bailie’s crowning achievements was securing the rights to Janet Kay’s 1979 U.K. hit, “Silly Games,” an anthem of the reggae subgenre called *Lovers Rock*. Early in the film, three women sing it a cappella while preparing the night’s food in the kitchen. Kay’s version sweeps in at the film’s emotional apex,

playing out on the dance floor; it’s followed by an impromptu version sung a cappella by all the actors, still on the dance floor.

One of those singers is legendary music producer Dennis Bovell. Bailie tracked him down while trying to secure the rights to the song, which Bovell wrote and produced forty-some years ago.

“It’s that part of the evening when everyone is united and gets lost together in a perfect moment,” Bailie says. “And you can hear this big, booming voice that’s just unmistakably Dennis. You see everything coming together on the set and you realize this is a really important time capsule. It’s a real love letter to the era.” —Bob Makela



Ed Bailie

WILL ROBSON-SCOTT

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

"A THRILL"

USA TODAY

"PINNOCK'S PERFORMANCE HAS REAL FIRE"

PEOPLE



FOR LIFE

WEDNESDAYS 10|9c **abc**

abc signature



As the industry cautiously emerges from shutdown, work for postproduction professionals is far from business as usual. Instead of returning to state-of-the-art facilities, many will have to work from home. Despite the lack of a commute, they face a bumpy road, says a prominent producer and editor.

"Posting from home is not the same as posting in a facility. Expect it to be challenging," says Liam McNiff, the Emmy-winning producer of the documentary *Matt Shepard Is a Friend of Mine*. Also a veteran nonfiction editor, he has worked remotely on such projects as *Happy Jail*, a prison reality series on Netflix.

Not only will the facility experience — both software and hardware — have to be rebuilt at home, the biggest adjustment will be the human factor, McNiff says. Postproduction is collaborative: showrunners sit elbow-to-elbow with editors, sound mixers talk through creative roadblocks with colleagues down the hall, and coordinators track a project's progress.

Recreating those interactions will be logistically important. "If you don't maintain a similar level of communication that would occur if we weren't socially distanced, you won't have the information you need to make decisions about budget, scheduling and such," he says.

Good communication will also be crucial for managing the uncharted psychological strain of working from home and the pandemic overall. Some people will have to be more open about their struggles with concentration, child care and mental health, while others will have to be more understanding about such matters.

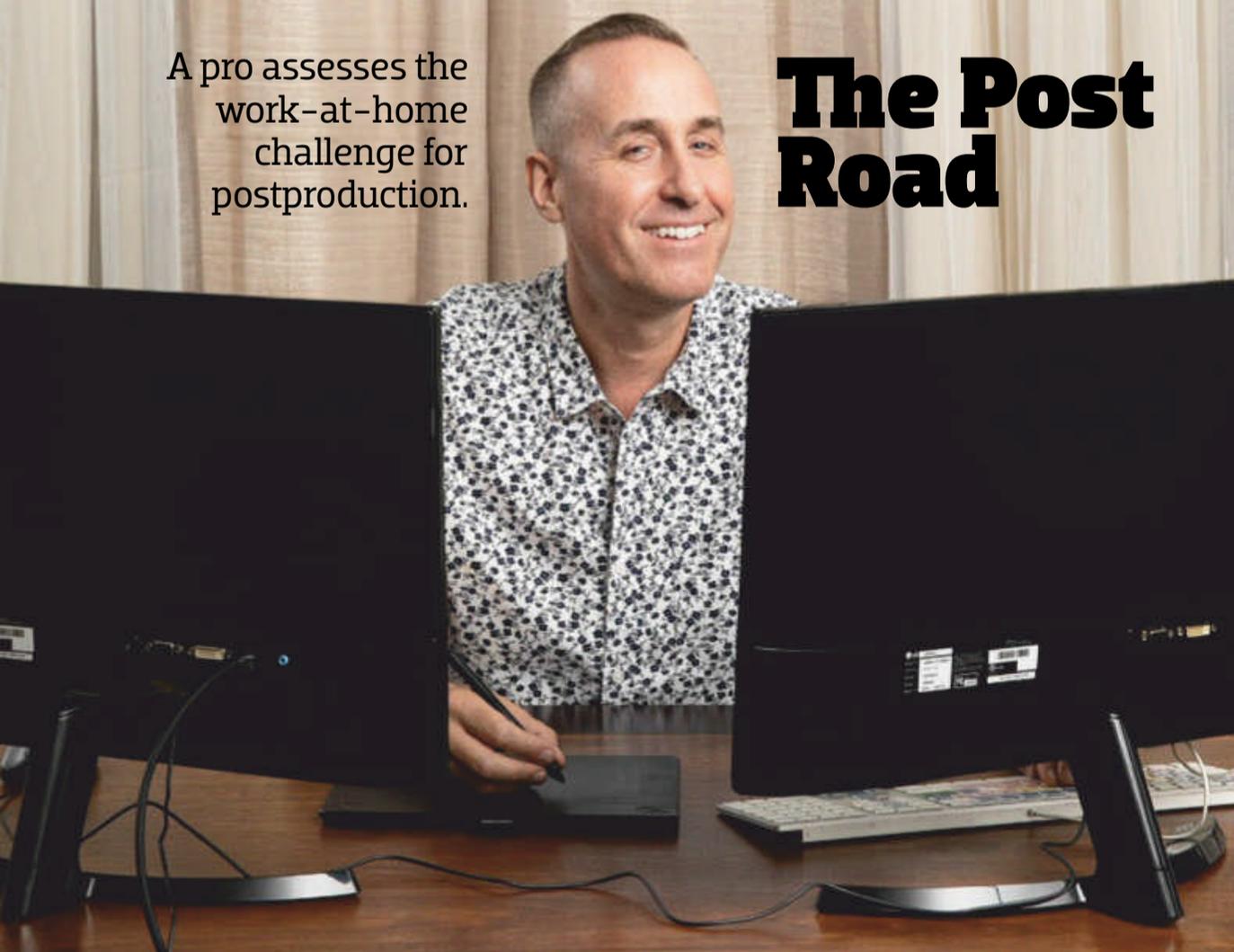
"Vulnerability is incredibly important. You want to know how people are feeling," McNiff says. That's important on an empathetic level and a practical one, too. "You don't want to be depending on an editor to rock out a cut at the witching hour on Friday... and then find out you miscalculated as to whether they are able to deliver."

Expect the unexpected. "Things are going to come up that you're not aware of — and may not be completely prepared for," McNiff says.

No matter the challenges, he believes television's postproduction pros are suited to the task. "Every one of us who has succeeded in this business has done that because we're resilient and innovative and creative," he says. "We're 100 percent going to get through this." — Alexander Huls

A pro assesses the work-at-home challenge for postproduction.

The Post Road



Keeping production on track during the pandemic requires strict rules — and stress relief.

House Rules

LATELY, NADIA WEBB COGSVILLE'S JOB HAS FELT MORE LIKE A TRAFFIC COP, SHE WRYLY NOTES, THAN A NETWORK EXEC. AS BET's executive vice-president of programming operations, business and legal affairs, she is responsible for the legal and operational aspects of content across all BET platforms. But since last spring, she's spent most of her time on production issues related to the pandemic.

"Trying to produce shows during a pandemic has been an unprecedented challenge," says the New York-based exec. "For each production, we have detailed guidelines that include everything from PPE to safety officers on set."

The network tracks and abides by public health protocols from local, state and federal authorities, which are constantly evolving, she says. Some locations that opened for filming subsequently closed because of an uptick in the virus. A particular challenge has been finding safe places to film while meshing schedules with talent availability.



Nadia Webb Cogsville

Wherever the productions land, filming must follow union guidelines (DGA, SAG-AFTRA and IATSE) and must address on- and off-camera concerns. Cast and crew are broken into pods; those on set are tested for Covid three times a week, while crew members who aren't on set every day are tested once a week. Safety questionnaires and temperature checks are conducted daily. Open craft services are gone, PPE is worn and social distancing is the rule.

BET has had six series in production during 2020, plus seven Tyler Perry series (such as *Sistas* and *The Oval*) completed at Perry's 330-acre studio lot in Atlanta, where shows have been filming in quarantine bubbles. "Lots of channels are looking at the Perry model to see what can be done," Webb Cogsville says. "BET doesn't have its own lot that we can lock down, but we're trying to borrow best practices."

In this year of change, adapting to change has become routine, says the exec.

"Here at BET, we develop content for people who love Black culture, a mission I'm passionate about," she says. "During this pivotal moment of social unrest, it's important for us to not be fatigued. BET doesn't just want to entertain its audience. It wants to engage and empower it."

In the meantime, this mother of two finds that very long walks help relieve stress. "The length of Central Park is about six miles," she notes. "It's a good way to get exercise and to get the sun on your face." —Dinah Eng

“AUDACIOUS & PROVOCATIVE
an exploration of race in America”
THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

“*absolutely*
ASTOUNDING”
UPROXX

“SUPERB ACTING
from Smollett and Majors”
USA TODAY

“REMARKABLE & SPELLBINDING
*defies genre stereotypes with fantastic
Black talent both in front of & behind the camera*”
TV GUIDE

“A MASTERPIECE”
NPR

“THRILLING & *so damn fun*”
DECIDER

“SMART, GRIPPING
and wonderfully wild...a stunning dissection of America's racist history”
TIME

“A GENRE-BENDING TOUR DE FORCE”

ROLLING STONE

“*an utterly*
IMAGINATIVE, WILD RIDE”
THE A.V. CLUB

“STANDOUT
PERFORMANCES
from Majors and Smollett”
OBSERVER

“SPELLBINDING
& IRRESISTIBLE
*the kind of ambitious
TV one should watch to know
where TV is right now*”
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

“★★★★★”
THE GUARDIAN

HBO | FYC

LOVECRAFT COUNTRY

NOW
STREAMING

HBOmax

Three passions — classical music, American jazz and cinema — grounded the formative years of composer Fabrice Lecomte, each of which fused when it came time for him to score *Sylvie's Love*. The tale of a stymied romance between an ambitious young TV producer (Tessa Thompson) and a striving jazz musician (Nnamdi Asomugha) in 1957 New York City drops December 25 on Amazon Prime Video.

Lecomte's involvement in the film from writer-director Eugene Ashe now seems predestined. Raised in Milan, Italy, Lecomte played piano in a jazz trio as a teenager; just a few years later he was entrenched at Mannes School of Music in New York City studying classical music and film composition. Cut to a wedding decades later, where Lecomte — who in the interim had won praise for his classical works and had begun teaching film scoring — struck up an immediate friendship with Ashe, who was then planning *Sylvie's Love*.

When Ashe heard examples of Lecomte's lyrical work, he knew he had found his composer. "Eugene told me he wanted every cue to be melodic and hummable," Lecomte says. "I strongly believe that you have to sustain a melody to achieve emotional arcs within a film. When you grow up absorbing the great Italian opera tradition, you tend to find your own gift for melody."

Balancing the continental taste of the composer — who now makes his home in Manhattan — was his still-percolating fervor for jazz. Inspired by the work of such classic late-'50s jazz artists as John Coltrane, Dexter Gordon and Sonny Rollins, Lecomte initially wrote idiomatic tunes to be performed

by a jazz quartet made up of such acclaimed players as saxophonist Mark Turner (who would be the soundtrack stand-in for Asomugha's character, Robert) and pianist Uri Caine. (The Lecomte song heard over the closing credits is performed by jazz star Cécile McLorin Salvant, who also wrote the

French lyrics.)

But the film also features orchestral themes that reflect Lecomte's classical training and love of classic film scores by such international masters as Ennio Morricone.

"Eugene told me to go for the heart, to evoke a lush Michel Legrand-like sweep," Lecomte recalls of the like-minded director. "To achieve that, I told the producers I'd like to use a forty-eight-piece orchestra. They gulped, but they agreed. It turned out to be a great experience. After the session was over, some orchestral members — tired of the fragments and sound effects they usually played for film scores — came over to thank me for composing an actual melody they could play!"

Lecomte, who also does his own arranging ("I can only truly express myself when I'm in control"), is unabashedly unfashionable in his desire to compose memorable themes that first move and then linger with the viewer. "I think I cherish melody in film," he says, "because I'm a sucker for a love story." —Steve Futterman

ONDINE LECOMTE

Star-crossed love meets all that jazz in the music of an oh-so-continental composer.

A Score Made for Amour



"FIERY & FEARLESS"
a fearlessness that's almost breathtaking
UPROXX

"michaela coel is
RIVETING
impossible to turn away from"
THE NEW YORK TIMES

"A TOUR DE FORCE"
DEN OF GEEK

**"A STANDOUT
PERFORMANCE"**
THE NEW YORKER

"an ode to the **BLACK FEMALE ARTIST**
DECIDER

**"EXTRAORDINARY
& BREATHTAKING"**
THE GUARDIAN

"BOLD & RAW"
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

**"COEL IS
CAPTIVATING"**
*honesty unseen on
television before*
THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"★★★★"
THE TELEGRAPH

"GRADE: A"
INDIEWIRE

**"BRILLIANTLY
EXECUTED"**
THE A.V. CLUB

**"THE TV SERIES
OF THE YEAR"**
GQ

**HBO | FYC
I MAY
DESTROY YOU**

NOW
STREAMING

HBOmax

A director who relished *Little House* as a girl brings its pioneer author to life.

Wild About Wilder

When producer-director Mary McDonagh Murphy set out to make a documentary about Laura Ingalls Wilder for PBS's *American Masters*, she knew the story would strike a deep chord — and not just with fans of the author's *Little House on the Prairie* books.

"Her life was nothing short of remarkable," Murphy says. "She endured hardship and poverty but had the grit to overcome it. And her work ethic was extraordinary. She didn't start writing the books until she was sixty-three and kept at it for the next ten years. Even if you didn't read and fall in love with *Little House* as a child, you've got to give it up for Laura Ingalls Wilder."

Murphy did devour the books as a girl, but she admits the idea for *Laura Ingalls Wilder: Prairie to Page*, which debuts December 29, came from another diehard fan. That was director and historical consultant Chris Czajka, with whom she'd worked on her acclaimed 2012 PBS documentary, *Harper Lee: Hey, Boo*, about the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

"He knew everything, from the number of copies in print to how many fans Wilder has on Facebook," she says. But getting the project off the ground wasn't easy. "It took a long time and several attempts before we got an NEA grant, and once we did, we had to figure out how to film the documentary. It's hard doing anything about a writer, since there aren't a lot of action-packed scenes, and finding archival material was also a huge challenge."



Mary McDonagh Murphy

Trying to replicate the hardscrabble landscape of Wilder's time — she based the books on her family's experiences in Wisconsin, Kansas, Minnesota and Iowa in the late nineteenth century — was almost impossible, Murphy adds. "I've never used them much, but thank goodness for drones. It was the only way we could capture big sweeping shots of the prairies."

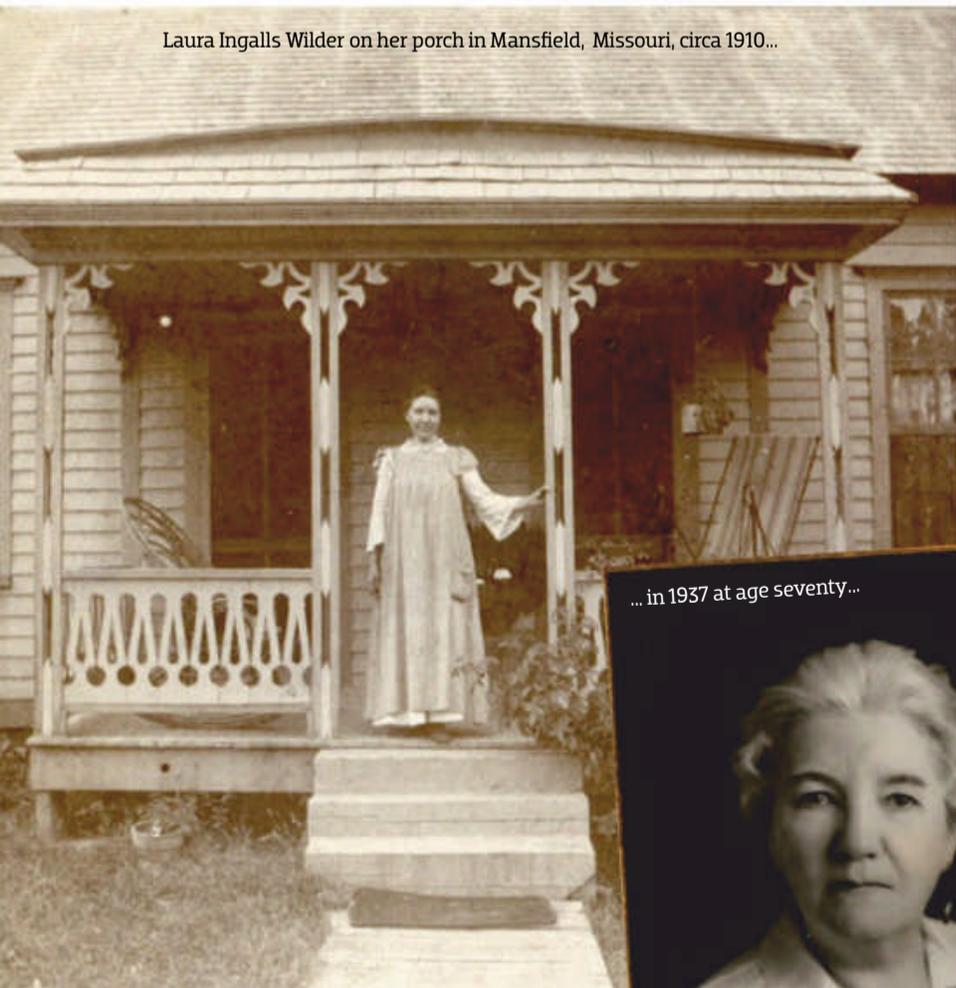
Fortunately, she got access to Rocky Ridge Farm, the picturesque home in Missouri where Wilder wrote the entire eight-volume series. And there were great visuals at LauraPalooza, the biannual conference near the Ingalls family homestead in Wisconsin, where fans get into frontier mode and wear calico skirts and bonnets.

Shooting started in the summer of 2019, but Murphy only recently finished, thanks to the coronavirus, which brought things to a halt. "We shot the last interviews in people's backyards," she says. "Now we have to figure out how to make those look like everything we'd already done. Covid is testing our pioneer spirit!"

Wilder remains a source of inspiration. "Rereading her as an adult, you can see the stoicism and strength, which you don't see as a child. And even though our interpretation of pioneer history has changed, her writing is universal and touches people on an emotional level. At the end of the day, her books are about a close, happy family, which is what we all want." —Paula Chin

CHRIS CARROLL; COURTESY OF THE LAURA INGALLS WILDER HOME AND MUSEUM, MANSFIELD, MO; LIW MEMORIAL SOCIETY, DE SMET, SD

Laura Ingalls Wilder on her porch in Mansfield, Missouri, circa 1910...



... in 1937 at age seventy...



... and signing books.

*"the cast is
INCREDIBLE"*
UPROXX

*"MATTHEW RHYS IS
fantastic"*
THE GUARDIAN

*"ABSORBING
gorgeous, gritty"*
VULTURE

"beautifully shot...RIVETING TO WATCH"
THE A.V. CLUB

*"SUPERB
perfectly lays out a compelling and expanding mystery"*
THE WASHINGTON POST

*"darkly compelling
IMPECCABLY CRAFTED"*
TVLINE

*"ONE OF THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL SERIES
EVER MADE"*
INDIEWIRE

*"full of
DELIGHTFUL
SURPRISES"*
NPR

*"TOP-NOTCH
writing and directing"*
NEW YORK POST

*"filled with
GREAT
PERFORMANCES"*
ROLLING STONE

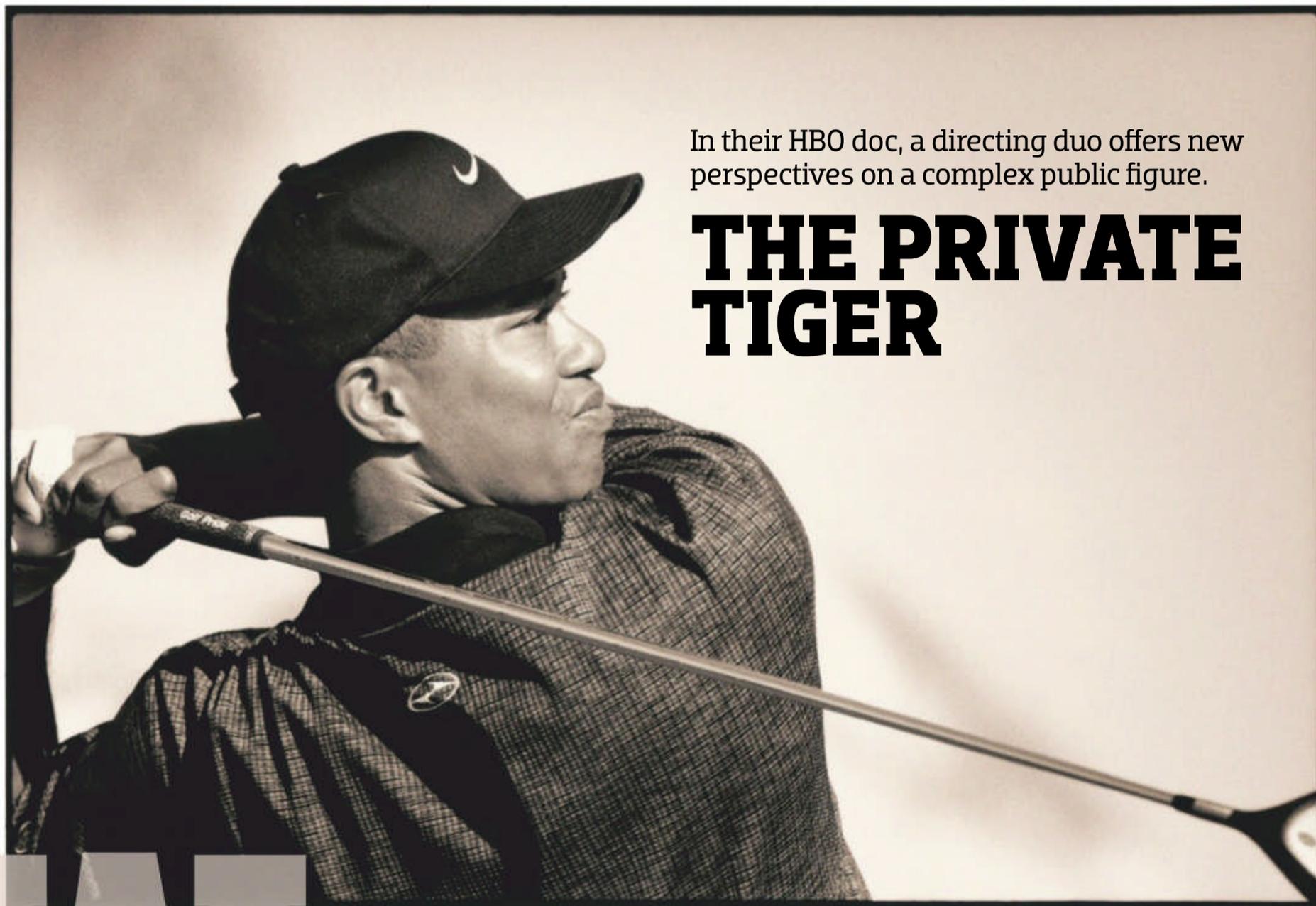
*"sumptuous... engrossing and
UNPREDICTABLE"*
VANITY FAIR

*"METICULOUSLY DETAILED
and beautifully photographed"*
TV GUIDE

HBO | FYC

P
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NOW
STREAMING | HBOmax



In their HBO doc, a directing duo offers new perspectives on a complex public figure.

THE PRIVATE TIGER

WALTER IOOSS, JR. FOR FOURELEVEN.AGENCY/HBO

When Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning director Matthew Heineman (*Cartel Land*) and his longtime editor, Matthew Hamachek (*City of Ghosts*), set out to codirect the documentary *Tiger*, they faced a unique challenge: how do you tell the story of a man — in this case, Tiger Woods — who's been under the microscope of public scrutiny for more than twenty-five years?

"What Matt and I try to do with our films," Heineman says, "is not oversimplify an idea, or a story or a person or a character. And, obviously, *Tiger* is extraordinarily complex."

Heineman says the goal for this HBO documentary, which is based on the 2019 book *Tiger Woods* by Jeff Benedict and Armen Keteyian and produced by Alex Gibney's Jigsaw Productions, was to go beyond what everyone thinks they know about Woods. The celebrated golfer first entered the public eye at age two, when he went on *The Mike Douglas Show* and wowed guests Bob Hope and Jimmy Stewart with his sweet swing.

"One of the biggest challenges with somebody like Tiger is piercing that shell — and finding people who knew him intimately before that shell went up," Hamachek says. The Brooklyn-based editor took a road trip to southern California to track down people who'd been close to Woods. Among those featured in the program: Woods's kindergarten teacher; his longtime caddie, Steve Williams; and Joe Grohman, a close family friend and PGA pro who witnessed Tiger's dad, Earl, sneak off to his camper at the golf course for dalliances with many of his female golf students.

Hamachek and producer Jenna Millman also parked in front of the home of Dina Parr, Woods's high-school girlfriend, to pitch her on participating. Parr ended up supplying key stories and footage of a pre-fame Woods dancing and playing air saxophone. "I still remember popping that on for the

first time [during the edit], and saying, 'Nobody has ever seen this version of Tiger Woods,'" Hamachek says. "It was just incredible."

At its heart, the two-part series — premiering January 10 on HBO and HBO Max — is a father-son story. It features footage of a young Tiger bantering with his father on the golf course, plus images of Earl Woods celebrating after various Tiger victories.

One key piece of film Hamachek dug up was from a speech that Earl Woods had given at the Haskins Award dinner in 1996, when his son was crowned top collegiate golfer. The speech was "the perfect framing device" for the series, Heineman says, because, "It was about Earl's grand vision for his son, which he'd had since Tiger was two."

Hamachek says they had a rule in the edit room regarding Earl's infidelities — and Tiger's too. "I wanted to make sure we made a movie that was hard-hitting and honest, but also made with a lot of care and respect for Tiger at the same time. I told the editors to keep in mind that one day his kids are going to watch this. So, let's make it tastefully."

—Bob Makela

Disappointing
her mother
since 1982. 

Mayim Bialik

Call me Kat

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SERIES PREMIERE
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Covid slows, but doesn't stop, the expansion of the franchise.

LOOK WHO'S WALKING

In the decade or so that *The Walking Dead* executive producers Scott M. Gimple and Angela Kang have been thinking about the apocalypse, not once did they consider that it might prompt a shortage of bathroom supplies. "We were sitting around and going, 'Man! We never thought of the toilet paper,'" says Gimple, the franchise's chief content officer.

The AMC smash and its slate of spinoffs have not been immune to Covid-19. The flagship show's season-ten finale slipped from spring to October, as did the launch of *The Walking Dead: World Beyond*, a new limited series. *Fear the Walking Dead* had to suspend shooting its sixth season, and the much-ballyhooed film (featuring Andrew Lincoln's character, Rick Grimes, who departed the series on a mysterious helicopter in season nine) was also delayed.

But watching the real-world pandemic play out also gave the two EPs and the franchise's various showrunners a useful pause for reflection. "It deepened our thinking," Kang says. "How could it not?"

Beyond toilet paper, they thought about class divisions, supply chain disruption, cabin fever and failed safety measures. And what about having some zombies wear masks? "Maybe that was something people tried for a minute," Kang says. "Entirely possible, and probable," Gimple admits. "There was a lot of confusion and misinformation."

When *The Walking Dead* returns in 2021, it will be for six special episodes, a postscript to season ten. These bonus episodes will feature more pre-apocalypse backstories and more intimate, character-driven stories.

Shooting those extra episodes allows the action-heavy production to ease back into filming large zombie hordes before beginning work on the supersized eleventh and final season of twenty-four episodes. All together, the thirty new episodes will address the Commonwealth society storyline

that fans of the comic books have been expecting. It will also set up the Daryl and Carol spinoff (starring Norman Reedus and Melissa McBride) coming in 2023. Kang says, "They have a very special bond that we love writing about."

An anthology show now in development will feature characters from all corners of the *Walking Dead* universe. That show, *Tales of the Walking Dead*, will also play with genre and format. "Some will be horror stories, some will be black comedy, some will be adventures," Gimple says. "Some might use animation. We could have music-driven episodes."

Clearly, innumerable stories could be told in the world of *The Walking Dead*, but some tales must come to an end. The two-season limited series, *World Beyond*, is part of that endgame. This spinoff, showrunner Matt Negrete points out, tells its own story while cross-pollinating and uniting the franchise's mythology by delving deeper into the enigmatic organization known as the Civic Republic Military.

"We'll be telling these stories that will inform you who those people are, how they operate and what their end goals are," Negrete says. "It's all coming together in a really cool way." —Jennifer Vineyard



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LIVE + ON DEMAND + STREAMING

Artist Cris Shapan delivers pandemic relief with his witty and wacky creations.

RETRO RESCUE



If you've spent more than a little time on social media — and who hasn't in recent months? — you've likely seen some artwork by Cris Shapan. Shared and reshared, his faux-retro ads, album covers, TV Guide listings and magazine layouts reimagining twentieth-century show biz are often uncredited but always uproarious.

As a graphic artist for the HBO series *Barry*, Shapan is responsible for such designs as the theater posters of pedantic thespian Gene Cousineau (Henry Winkler). Off the set, with his software-savvy art, Shapan skates the fine line, as he puts it, between "the plausibly absurd and the absurdly plausible."

Consider, for example, his ad for "Gavin," a fragrance purportedly from the meatpacker Hormel, which invites men to "smell like a captain" (i.e., Gavin

Gavin MacLeod
Star of ABC's *The Love Boat*
Saturdays at 8:00pm

Smell Like a Captain.

Gavin MacLeod spends his workday pretending to shepherd lonely people to romance...But in real life, Gavin knows exactly what the ladies are looking for - a manly fragrance overloaded with muscular overtones, unabashedly male while still undeniably sensitive.

Hormel has captured this fragrance for the first time with Gavin™, the first cologne based on a sea-captain based celebrity.

The Gavin™ fragrance collection is available in Cologne, Eau de Toilette, After Shave and Deodorant. All these products are available as a Gavin™ Gift Set, with the added bonus of our exclusive Sea Captain™ Mincare & Cleanliness Kit. Gavin™ makes a great gift for Father's Day or Graduation. You can find Gavin™ at your favorite men's department store's men's department.

Women love the softness of Gavin™. You will too.

Gavin™ A New Fragrance From Hormel.

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WILLIAM DEMAREST:
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NO HEAVY LOVE TRIP FOR MAUDIE PRICKETT & JAMES WESTERFIELD

JOE FLYNN
ADMITS HIS WILD HANG-UPS!

RETA SHAW'S GROOVY FOUNDATION UNDERGARMENTS!

A SNEAK PEEK AT EDWARD ANDREWS' WALET!

MacLeod, Captain Merrill Stubing of ABC's *The Love Boat*).

Then there's his Don Knotts album, "Aladdon Sane," a takeoff of David Bowie's *Aladdin Sane*, featuring the beloved Barney Fife from *The Andy Griffith Show*, a bright lightning bolt slashed across his face.

And there's "Frumpy Beat U.S.A.," whose cover teases scorching scoops on the bad trips of Uncle Charley from *My Three Sons* ("Acid just makes me angrier!" admits William Demarest) and false starts with feminism by TV's favorite housekeeper ("I ain't

Let Mickey cook for you tonite!

MICKEY ROONEY'S POTATO FANTASY, NORTH HOLLYWOOD, U.S.A.

Mickey is very excited about his all-new restaurant. "What a great country, where a fella can offer up hot spuds to whoever wants to eat 'em! Ka-pow!"

And here at Mickey Rooney's Potato Fantasy Family Restaurant, he does just that: He serves great potato dishes at great potato prices to great potato families like yours. But you don't have to bring anyone... "Come in by yourself," says Mickey, "and we'll talk about me!"

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Select Idaho Russet, 4 ways:
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- MASHED POTATOES
- AU GRATIN
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(MICK SAYS, "TRY 'EM!")

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burnin' a perfectly good \$3 brassiere!" declares Hazel's Shirley Booth).

Shapan's pièce de résistance may be his ad for the all-spud family restaurant Mickey Rooney's Potato Fantasy, where happy hour lasts

thirty minutes, drumming is performed live every Sunday, and seniors and vets get a free handshake from Andy Hardy with every starchy entrée.

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Until Ruth Buzzi had driven it herself, she could not fully appreciate the first altogether new Lincoln Continental in nearly a decade. Its impressive new size was immediately apparent to Ruth. So is the distinctive new styling that caught her stylish eye. But above all, Lincoln Continental makes this the year of Ruth Buzzi's Comfort.

Ruth Buzzi's Comfort is the result of many innovations. A longer wheelbase. The widest stance on the road today. The industry's largest drive shaft, rubber cushioned so that Ruth won't feel vibrations. The 4-coil spring suspension that keeps Ruth's ass planted deeply in the latex foam padding. And the remarkable deep-breathing 460 cubic-inch engine, which is so smooth Ruth is barely aware she's driving a car at 120 miles per hour.

Discover Ruth Buzzi's Comfort. Test Drive the Lincoln Continental at your Lincoln-Mercury dealer.

Ruth Buzzi

A Study in Elegance

LINCOLN-MERCURY

TV GUIDE

Is America Sick & Tired Of The Sweathogs?
Katler Stewart Out Welcomes, Page 25

25c Local Programs
November 5-11

Did Der Bingle Expire Just To Avoid Doing It?

The Bing & Iggy Holiday Special:
Preempted By Death
Page 16

Iggy Pop and The Late Bing Crosby

Producer Jonathan Krisel, who hired Shapan to help create the title sequence for Comedy Central's *Kroll Show*, calls him an "amazingly talented" artist whose work is "awesome to behold." Shapan only occasionally finds his own imaginings as funny as his fans do. "Sometimes I do laugh my ass off and think, where did that come from?" he allows.

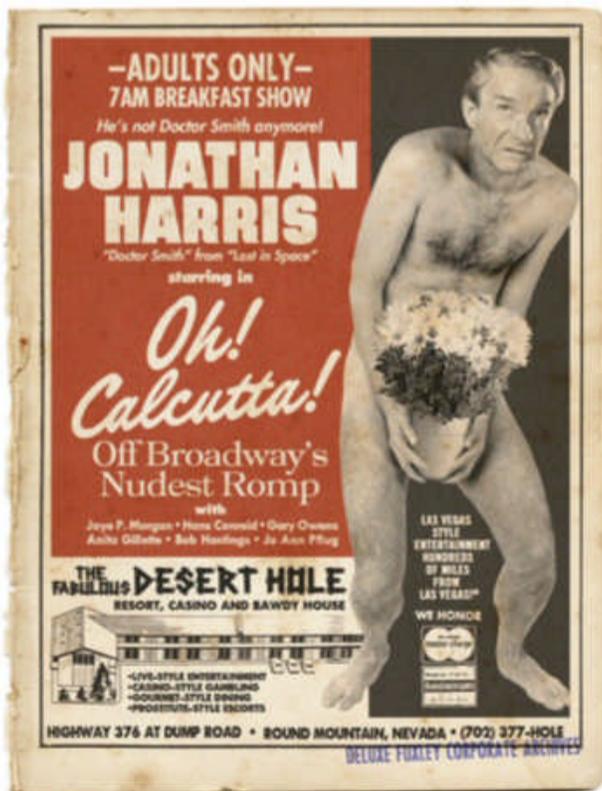
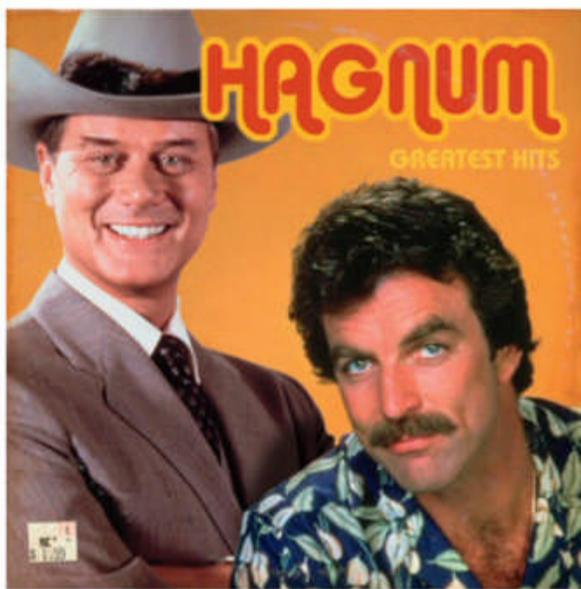
Count comedian Patton Oswalt among Shapan's legion of admirers. "Not only does he imagine an alternate universe of ill-advised, Z-list celebrity business ventures and creative itches," says the writer-performer, "but he does so in such detail that you have to look twice to make sure it isn't real."

Indeed, Shapan's mock-ups have been mistaken for the genuine article. Snopes, the fact-checking website, was asked to debunk a wacky ad for "Johnson's Winking Glue," an eye-shutting adhesive, and another for "Dickman's Boned Rolled Pig," trumpeted as "legally edible" and "fire resistant."

Musician Brian Eno took to Twitter to insist he'd never endorsed a line of food for bored felines (despite Shapan's ersatz evidence), but most celebs get a kick out of the leg-pulling. *Laugh-In* star Ruth Buzzi was tickled (and tweeted so) when she saw herself hawking a 1970 Lincoln Continental so smooth-riding that "Ruth is barely aware she's driving 120 miles per hour."

With extra time on his hands during the pandemic, Shapan is doubling down.

"I'm cranking this out as fast as I can, both to stay sane and



to give people something to look at other than horrible news," he says. "We graphic designers aren't usually regarded as first responders. But if I can give people a respite where they can lose themselves and laugh a bit, maybe I have contributed something."

Shapan grew up steeped in offbeat humor in the L.A. suburbs, where his parents cocktail-partied with the likes of Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks. As a kid, he read *National Lampoon* and *Mad*, listened to *The Dr. Demento Show* and studied art under animators who'd worked at Disney, MGM and Hanna-Barbera.

His favorite childhood moment, he says, occurred at the height of *Happy Days* hysteria, when, running outside his school, he accidentally head-butted Tom Bosley in his ample gut. The performer better known as Howard Cunningham was not amused. But such brushes with fame colored Shapan's oeuvre and fueled his love of

character actors — the more obscure, the better.

"When I was growing up, everyone I knew had a TV show," he remembers. "I thought you grow up and you just go on TV."

Though Shapan himself has never appeared on such series as *Baskets* or *Another Period*, he's satisfied that his graphic designs have done so. "That I made it in the business — however I made it there — I'm pleased," he says. "I'm no Efrem Zimbalist Jr., but who is?" —Frank DeCaro





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LENNY

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"LEONARD GOT ROWDY ON RAWHIDE!"

LEONARD REVIEWS THE LATEST

FROZEN AND INSTANT PUDDINGS

SKATEBOARD WITH LEONARD CONTEST

LEONARD WEIGHS IN ON OUISP VS. QUAKE!



Leonard "Goes Electric" at Monterey Pop Festival Page 8

ELIZABETH OLSEN



The Marvel Cinematic Universe comes to television with *WandaVision*, the new Disney+ series that places a super-powered Elizabeth Olsen and Paul Bettany in the suburbs of classic sitcoms. Alternative reality? Social experiment? One thing's for sure, says Marvel's Kevin Feige: "An experience like *WandaVision* is something you can't get in a movie."

BY MARA REINSTEIN

NOT YOUR MOTH

PAUL BETTANY

ER'S SUBURBS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **RICKY MIDDLESWORTH**

HAIR BY **KAREN BARTEK**

MAKEUP BY **TRICIA SAWYER**

STYLING FOR PAUL BETTANY BY **ALICIA LOMBARDINI**

JACKET AND TURTLENECK BY **LUCA PAVONI**

PANT BY **LOUIS VUITTON**; BOOTS BY **CLARKS**

ELIZABETH OLSEN'S CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES HER OWN.

WHEN

YOU WISH UPON A LUXURIOUS STAR, YOU JUST MIGHT LAND AT CLUB 33 IN DISNEYLAND. TUCKED AWAY ABOVE NEW ORLEANS SQUARE AND DECORATED WITH HISTORIC FLOURISHES (THE HARPSICHORD AT RECEPTION BELONGED TO WALT DISNEY'S WIFE, LILLIAN), IT'S A PRICEY, ULTRA-EXCLUSIVE CLUB FOR MEMBERS AND VIPS. ON AUGUST 25, 2019, MARVEL STUDIOS PRESIDENT AND CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER KEVIN FEIGE, JOINED BY PRODUCER-DIRECTOR MATT SHAKMAN, ENJOYED LUNCH AND SWAPPED STORIES THERE WITH DICK VAN DYKE AND HIS WIFE, ARLENE.

"It was unbelievable!" Feige recalls. "You sit down and don't know what to say because you're so starstruck." Shakman is more succinct: "It was the best afternoon of my life."

They weren't there just to catch up with a ninety-three-year-old legend. They were about to start production on an innovative Disney+ series called *WandaVision* — which Shakman will only describe as a "love letter to television" — and they wanted to hear about the star's experiences on his groundbreaking 1960s sitcom, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*.

Van Dyke waxed about his fellow actor and the show creator, Carl Reiner, who mined real-life anecdotes for the episodes, as well as his own delight at filming in front of live studio audiences. In turn, Feige talked about the new series he was executive-producing with Shakman, among others. "I tried to explain how there was this robot and a witch and how she had to kill him because Thanos reversed time," he says with a laugh. "I'm thinking, 'He doesn't need to hear this!'"

With the premiere of *WandaVision* on January 15, it will all click. Set after the events of the 2019 blockbuster *Avengers: Endgame*, the weekly series — which is patterned on prototypical sitcoms of various eras — explores the adventures of Wanda Maximoff (Elizabeth Olsen) and her love, an android named Vision (Paul Bettany). Yes, Vision died when the Mind Stone was ripped from his forehead in the 2018 film *Avengers: Infinity War*, and he is still dead. But rules can be malleable when one of the two main characters is also known as Scarlet Witch.

"What I love about Wanda in the comic books, and what drew me to her originally," Olsen says, "is what we get to explore in a beautiful way."

To that end, even a witch couldn't have manipulated the series' timing any better. When Disney+ launched in November 2019, it did so with the promise that the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) would soon unveil new series based on some of its lower-profile action heroes. At last, fans of the gazillion-grossing, twenty-three-movie Infinity Saga would enjoy extensive and exclusive insights into the likes of Falcon, the Winter Soldier, Wanda, Vision, Loki and others, all in episodic installments.

But the global pandemic wreaked havoc on production schedules. The *Falcon and the Winter Soldier* — which required a complex, multi-city shoot and was set to lead the charge — got pushed to 2021. That left *WandaVision*, which aims to change the future of the medium by paying homage to its past.

"The show is complicated," explains coexecutive producer Mary Livanos, "because we're incorporating the rules of the MCU and narrowing in on

suburban family sitcoms — but not all the episodes are structurally similar. What's fun about it is that it leads the audience to ask questions about when this takes place or whether this is a social experiment and if this is an alternative reality and an unraveling of the mystery. We're excited that the Disney+ platform allows us the creative space to play around."

Indeed, with revenues from cruises, theme parks and cinema down sharply due to the pandemic, Disney+ emerged as the clear winner in the Disney portfolio, signing more than 73 million global members in just eleven months. (The company had initially set its five-year goal at 60 million to 90 million.) Meanwhile, the Star Wars series *The Mandalorian* nabbed an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Drama Series — and seven awards in crafts categories — and the MCU has expanded into the freshly minted series *She-Hulk*, *Moon Knight* and *Ms. Marvel* (see sidebar).

Those successes led to a major announcement this fall from new chief executive Bob Chapek: Disney would realign its business divisions to focus future creative efforts squarely on Disney+.

Feige admits to growing up with "a near-unhealthy love and obsession" for some of the characters on his favorite shows, like *Alice* and *Little House on the Prairie*, and he's just as committed now to his behemoth production studio. "Streaming is 100 percent the future and where consumers want to watch things," he says. "And hopefully they'll want to watch our longform narrative series. An experience like *WandaVision* is something you can't get in a movie. You go to movies for things you can't get on streaming, and you go to streaming for things you can't get in a theater. And of course, everything in a theater goes to streaming eventually."

It was back in the days of yore — ahem, early 2018 — when then-Disney CEO Bob Iger approached Feige about extending the MCU for what would be a new Disney streaming service. At the time, Feige, who started at Marvel Studios as a producer in 2000 and became president of production in 2007, was wrapping up the ten-year-long Infinity Saga storyline. "My team and I were wondering internally about where to go from here, and what would be the next step that was equally challenging and unexpected," he relates. The notion of extending the brand to television "was an adrenaline boost."

Looking to showcase MCU characters who hadn't yet reached their potential in terms of screen time, he zeroed in on Wanda and Vision and their romantic but doomed love story. "Elizabeth and Paul were these amazing actors — who had done amazing things in four movies — but never had a chance to dominate the narrative because there was so much else going on," he explains. "It felt fun to finally give them a platform to showcase their astounding talent."

Bettany, for one, assumed that his run as Vision had ended with his death in *Infinity War*. "I was called in to see Kevin and [Marvel copresident] Louis D'Esposito and was convinced that they were going to be gentlemen and say, 'It's been a great ride; thank you for your work and good luck,'" he recalls. Instead, they pitched him what he describes as an "exciting and bonkers" idea for the character's return. "Of course, I said I was in."

During Olsen's meeting? "Kevin told me he wanted to merge two different comic series as inspiration. He explained the series would show how Wanda is originally from an Eastern European country and grew up on American black-market products like television," she says, then cuts herself off to avoid revealing spoilers. At first, she says, "I was a little bit nervous about Marvel doing something on television, because what does that mean and how could it possibly intertwine? But I got so excited when I heard that nugget of the idea."

That nugget grew into a fleshed-out narrative in early 2019 after Livanos, who is also director of production and development at Marvel Studios, tapped screenwriter Jac Schaeffer (*Captain Marvel*, *Black Widow*) as head writer. "We envisioned Wanda and Vision in this sitcom setting but didn't know what that meant until Jac came on," Livanos says.

Schaeffer remembers: "I got wind of this percolating crazy notion of this project and told myself that I needed to get in on that!"

Though Wanda and Vision rarely got to trade witty barbs in the *Avengers* movies, Schaeffer says, "I knew there was a sort of wonder and sincerity to the two of them. Then you combine that with the world of sitcom, which on its face is false and ridiculous. But when you peer into it, it's calm and warm and enmeshed with our shared sense of what home is, what family is and what this country is. So, we preserved the sanctity of their relationship and gave it a spin. This goes far beyond the banter-y stuff."

Schaeffer — who'd devoured *The Brady Bunch*, *Who's the Boss?*, *Growing Pains* and *Family Ties* as a kid — looked to TV's greatest hits as a guide. Think wholesome fare like *I Love Lucy*, *My Three Sons*, *Father Knows Best*, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, *Bewitched* and, of course, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. The team also included *Friends* and modern-day, ten-jokes-per-page shows like *30 Rock* and *Parks and Recreation*. And for extra meta, *Full House* — which starred Olsen's older sisters, Mary-Kate and Ashley — is also enmeshed in "the fabric of what we're doing," Schaeffer says.

They made their plans public during the much-anticipated Marvel presentation at Comic-Con in July 2019. MCU fans already salivating over the fall launch of Disney+ (where many movies would be streaming) became delirious at the announcement of *WandaVision* as well as *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*, *Loki* and the animated series *What If...?* (Feige also confirmed movies such as *The Eternals*, *Blade* and *Thor: Love and Thunder*). Nearly all of the principal actors appeared at the event to bless their respective projects.

"We walked off the stage feeling the love of the crowd," says Feige, who also serves as an executive producer of all the MCU series. "And then we said to ourselves, 'Now we have to earn the applause and fandom by delivering everything we've just promised.'"

For *WandaVision*, that delivery meant pulling off something like *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. Shakman, a former child actor who appeared on everything from *Diff'rent Strokes* to *The Facts of Life*, decided early on that *WandaVision*'s first episode had to be filmed in front of a live studio audience. "It elevates the comedy and the drive, and it's very helpful to the actors and helps me, too," he says. So, for two days in November 2019, a group of unknowing and lucky guests filed into an Atlanta soundstage to watch the 1950s-era version of *WandaVision* take shape.

Bettany compares the experience to summer-stock theater. "Lizzie and [costar] Kathryn Hahn and I were running around, bumping into each other, smashing props on each other behind the scenes," he recalls. "It was so exciting, but terrifying because we're all so used to playing
continued on page 50

COMING SOON FROM THE MCU...



The Falcon and the Winter Soldier

In the aftermath of Steve Rogers' retirement in *Avengers: Endgame*, Anthony Mackie's Sam Wilson (aka the Falcon) — proud new owner of the Captain America shield — and Sebastian Stan's James "Bucky" Barnes (aka the Winter Soldier) take on the world. That includes *Captain America: Civil War* villain Baron Zemo (Daniel Brühl).

"It's a relatively grounded series," says Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige, "and though it takes place in the Marvel world, it's more of a reflection of the real world. Considering it was written last year, it has only become more relevant and more poignant for our time." He singles out Mackie for strong leadership during the long production, which was shot in locales as far-flung as the Czech Republic.



Loki

When you're an MCU fan favorite, the small matter of death isn't necessarily the end of the line. Such is the case for Thor's mischievous brother (played with a wink by Tom Hiddleston), whom Thanos snuffed out in *Avengers: Infinity War*.

"Turning a whole show over to Tom has been a revelation," Feige says. "He carries every scene." The exec is cryptic about the format, noting that its playful structure and storyline could only have been achieved in serialized form. But he does single out the scripts by Michael Waldron (*Rick and Morty*): "Seeing Tom Hiddleston and [costar] Owen Wilson sitting across the table from each other doing fifteen pages of dialogue is amazing."



She-Hulk

That's Jennifer Walters to you. An attorney and cousin of Bruce Banner, aka the Hulk, she gets her powers via an emergency blood transfusion from her cousin. Unlike the surly green giant, however, she retains her intelligence and personality when she Hulks out. Though Feige won't confirm reports that Tatiana Maslany (*Orphan Black*, *Perry Mason*) has

been cast in the title role, he does reveal that the show will be a half-hour legal comedy ("We've never done that before") and that the story stays true to writer-artist John Byrne's comic books.



Moon Knight

"It's been a while since we've had an action hero who jumps out of buildings and gets into fights," Feige says. Enter Marc Spector (aka Moon Knight), a former U.S. Marine who has a version of a dissociative identity disorder. "The mental illness is a unique aspect of the program," he adds. The series, which will reportedly star Oscar Isaac,

taps into the iconography of ancient Egypt.



Ms. Marvel

A Pakistani-American teenager named Kamala Khan is Marvel's first Muslim hero. Based in a New Jersey housing development, she takes on the Ms. Marvel moniker as an homage to her hero, Carol Danvers, aka Captain Marvel. "It's a very fun story that's been popular in the comic books," Feige says. Newcomer Iman Vellani is taking on the title

role, per the Hollywood trades; Feige would not confirm.



What If...?

What if Peggy Carter had taken the Super Soldier serum instead of Steve Rogers? What if Peter Quill had never been abducted? These are some of the tantalizing scenarios that play out in this animated series.

"These are all sorts of stories we couldn't explore through live action," Feige explains. Several of the original actors came in to record their vocals — including *Black Panther* star Chadwick Boseman. "He came in about four times and recorded numerous episodes," Feige says of the actor, who died in August. "In hindsight, it's very moving." —M.R.









The WandaVision team includes industry vets known for adding pizzazz to their projects.

A COLLECTIVE VISION

JESS HALL, BSC, CINEMATOGRAPHER

Known for lensing the cutting-edge films *Hot Fuzz* (2007), *Grindhouse* (2007) and *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), the native Brit most recently shot the 2019 Anne Hathaway–Matthew McConaughey thriller *Serenity*.

MARK WORTHINGTON, PRODUCTION DESIGNER

After doing the art direction for movies ranging from *Tombstone* (1993) to *Wag the Dog* (1997) to *Austin Powers in Goldmember* (2002), he transitioned to production design on flashy TV series such as *Ugly Betty*, *American Horror Story*, *Scream Queens* and *Watchmen*.

FRÉDÉRIC AMBLARD, SET DESIGNER

Since 2003, he's collaborated with the likes of Darren Aronofsky (2006's *The Fountain*), Martin Scorsese (2010's *Shutter Island*) and James Mangold (2013's *The Wolverine*). On the MCU side, he did the set design for *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*. He's also worked on Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Amazon's *Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan*.

MAYES C. RUBEO, COSTUME DESIGNER

Her credits include the eye-popping films *Apocalypto* (2006), *Avatar* (2009), *World War Z* (2013) and, in the MCU, *Thor: Ragnarok* (2017). Last January, Rubeo made history by becoming the first Latina to be nominated for an Oscar for costume design, thanks to her brightly colored work on the offbeat *World War II* fantasy *Jojo Rabbit*.

CHRISTOPHE BECK, COMPOSER

He wrote the jaunty score for a tiny independent animated film called *Frozen* in 2013. (He handled the 2019 sequel as well.) But Beck started in television, scoring episodes of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel* and *The Practice*. —M.R.

continued from page 45

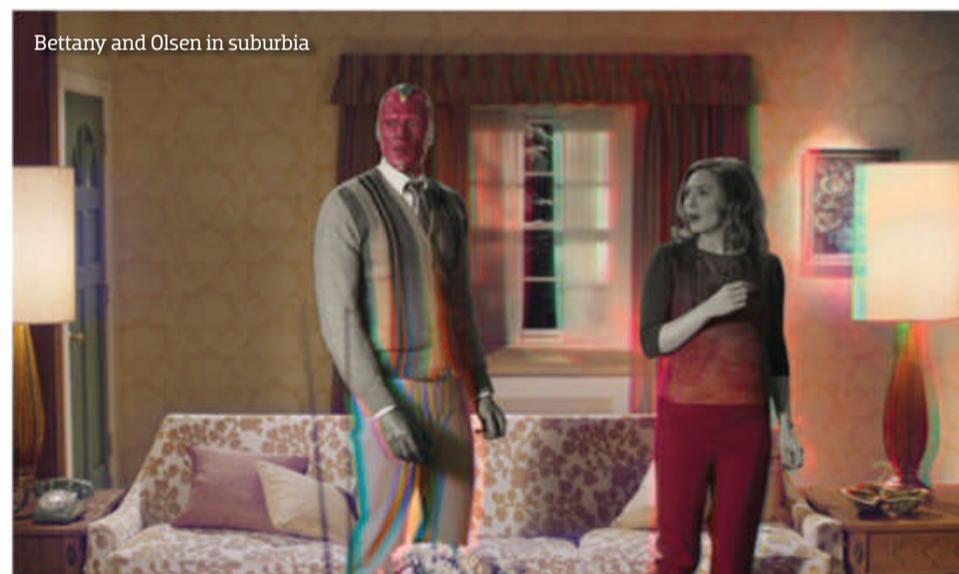
for the future audience in the camera." To enhance the fun, Olsen notes, the crew dressed in period garb while the head of security played the part of the audience emcee.

"Paul and I were so full of joy," she says. "We would look at each other and be like, 'Is this too much?!'"

The answer was no. Shakman — who directed all the episodes — explains that his topnotch behind-the-scenes team (see sidebar) did "a deep dive" into sitcom history to ensure that each installment adhered to the artistic lens of its respective decade. The actors had a week of sitcom "boot camp," watching episodes of various classics to capture the spirit of each tone and style. The '70s-era chapter, for example, features '70s-era lighting.

"We never wanted any of the sitcom work to feel like parody," says the director, who's also lensed episodes of *Game of Thrones*, *Mad Men*, *Succession* and *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*. "Everything needed to be as authentic as possible."

Bettany, whose MCU days began with voicing the J.A.R.V.I.S. intelligence system in 2008's *Iron Man*, is effusive about the results. "I can tell you that there is no difference in production values," he says. "It feels very much like every Marvel movie that I've been involved in. It's a seamless continuation." With more and more



people watching from home, he adds, "The blurring of the line between television and cinema is going to happen whether we like it or not, so it's really exciting to be providing a product that has absolutely cut no corners."

Team WandaVision had always planned to take a production break in early 2020 to reset for the next location shoot. But Covid-19 turned that timeout into a six-month hiatus. Cast and crew started back up again in early September in Los Angeles under rigorous safety protocols. "It's very peculiar being directed by somebody with most of their face hidden, and there's no hanging out on the set by the video village watching everyone else," Bettany adds. "But it is a version of the peculiar that at least works."

To be ready by the long-awaited January premiere date, the group logged marathon hours and worked six-day weeks for more than two months. (Olsen, in fact, is speaking on a late autumn Friday afternoon, en route to the set for a night shoot.) "We're chugging away as fast as we've ever been," Livanos says. "Marvel is really good about cranking through the work. We're the types of creatives who will continue to work on a show until the last possible second."

There's still magic amid the madness. Shakman is thrilled to have recently filmed on a legendary residential street of the Warner Bros. Ranch in Burbank, California. That's where Wanda and Vision reside. Once upon a time, so did the families from *Bewitched*, *The Partridge Family*, *I Dream of Jeannie* and a 1980s *Growing Pains* spinoff, *Just the Ten of Us*. Guess who starred in the latter. "I used to skateboard down that street when I was a kid!" Shakman says. "To make a wonderful, huge Marvel project there was very moving... and a little therapeutic."



long eighteen months have passed since the release of the previous MCU project, *Spider-Man: Far from Home*. Feige never anticipated such a gap, but he's confident that fan interest remains strong: "The wait has caused great, great anticipation."

He wants those fans to get as pumped about WandaVision and the subsequent MCU series as they would for the next high-profile *Thor* or *Guardians of the Galaxy* movie. "The marketing team — the people who make our amazing films feel like events — they're doing the same thing for our Disney+ series," he says. "That was something very important to us and important to Disney when we decided to enter this new arena. And it helps that each series is unique, intriguing and a new entry point. I don't even want to tell you what *Loki* is all about."

The first promising sign: WandaVision's eighty-second teaser trailer, which debuted during the Emmy Awards on September 20, amassed a whopping 56 million views across social media platforms in its first twenty-four hours. Per trade reports, it was the highest draw for any online streaming service advertisement, besting even the twenty-four-hour numbers set by this year's Super Bowl trailers for *Black Widow* and *Mulan*.

"When the trailer aired, we were two weeks into filming, exhausted and dealing with the smoke from the California fires," Olsen says. "To see the response really helped morale. The next day at work, we all had a little pep in our step. We refocused and got reenergized."

But for all the triumphs and eye-popping numbers, Feige says he still treats each project as if it's the last thing he'll ever do. Really. "We started out as an independent studio tasked with making *Iron Man*," he says. "We said to ourselves that if we don't pull this off, we won't have a studio or a movie. That allowed us to focus on every detail and leave no stone unturned. It's that mindset that keeps us striving. As Walt Disney used to say, we keep on plussing." 📌

The executive producers of WandaVision are Kevin Feige, Louis D'Esposito, Victoria Alonso, Matt Shakman and Jac Schaeffer; coexecutive producers are Mary Livanos and Trevor Waterson. For more with stars Elizabeth Olsen and Paul Bettany, go to [TelevisionAcademy.com/cover](https://www.TVAcademy.com/cover).



An actor-producer who knows how good guys can stray to the dark side, Bryan Cranston confronts a new crisis of conscience in Showtime's *Your Honor*. Offscreen, he maintains his moral compass. "All the great ones have a humility and this... work ethic," says his pal Vince Gilligan. "Once you start coasting, you've lost it. He'll never lose it because he's never going to be that guy."

BY MIKE FLAHERTY

His MORAL

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STUMBLING THROUGH 2020, WE'VE LEARNED TO TAKE PLEASURE AND COMFORT WHERE WE CAN. AGAINST THAT BACKDROP, VIEWERS HANKERING FOR ORIGINAL, HIGH-QUALITY TV WILL WELCOME BRYAN CRANSTON'S RETURN TO SERIES TELEVISION AS A DARK AND DELIGHTFUL HOLIDAY GIFT.

Seven years after the shattering finale of *Breaking Bad*, Cranston is executive-producing and starring in the limited series *Your Honor*, now airing on Showtime. Set in New Orleans, it's the story of a widowed middle-aged judge, Michael Desiato (Cranston), whose son, Adam (Hunter Doohan), flees the scene of a hit-and-run. When he later tells his father, Michael commands him to report the accident, which killed a young motorcyclist. But Michael fatefully reverses course and orders Adam to clam up when he learns that the father of the dead teen is a ruthless local crime boss (Michael Stuhlbarg).

In short order, an act of omission metastasizes into a nightmarish game of whack-a-mole. Despite increasingly active measures — lying, tampering with and even destroying evidence — Michael sinks deeper and deeper into accessory-after-the-fact criminality.

Cranston was intrigued by the story's central dilemma. "How far would you go to save the life of your child? What would you do?" he asks. "I think there is a lot of leeway there: would you become a criminal? Yes, I would. Well, how much of a criminal would you become?"

"Michael has to reverse-engineer the accident and think like a criminal,

which he knows something about," Cranston explains. "In his impulsive decision, he didn't think about the ramifications — he couldn't think clearly about what he would eventually have to do to keep this endeavor going, to keep his son alive."

In the process, a perverse, delicious role reversal takes shape: the judge becomes an outlaw and the mob kingpin a victim with the law on his side — though his plans for justice will be of the decidedly extrajudicial variety.

CRANSTON IS HOLDING FORTH FROM THE BIG EASY WHILE SHOOTING THE FINAL TWO EPISODES OF THE TEN-PART SERIES, PRODUCTION HAVING RESUMED AFTER A SIX-MONTH COVID HIATUS. HE IS HIMSELF A SURVIVOR, FOLLOWING AN INFECTION IN THE SPRING THAT SEEMED RELATIVELY MILD BUT HAS COMPROMISED HIS SENSES OF TASTE AND SMELL.

Like many, he did a lot of reading and a lot of movie-watching, and he found comfort in baking bread, a refreshing contrast to his job. "In my forty-one years of being an actor, the work's been imprecise, meaning that I have to create my own initiative, my own drive, my own schedule and keep pushing on my own. But sometimes it's nice just to follow instructions."

As a result, he says, "I make a pretty killer sourdough now."

Cranston's been killing it on set as well, reports Peter Moffat, showrunner, cowriter and an executive producer of *Your Honor*. The role requires Cranston

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARC HOM/TRUNKARCHIVE.COM





I'm doing. I've been so fortunate to have him as my main man."

What's more, in Cranston, Moffat sees Michael's essential decency. "I feel like he's a good man — that's what comes off him. So I could absolutely picture him as a good, liberal judge. He's principled, and he has a moral map that he lives by."

SOUND FAMILIAR? THAT'S BECAUSE *YOUR HONOR* PROVIDES VIEWERS WITH BOTH A THRILLING NEW JOURNEY AND THAT TICKLING SENSE OF WATCHING A BELOVED ACTOR DO WHAT HE DOES BEST.

Cranston has notched a number of successes over the past decade portraying "big" characters — blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo in the film *Trumbo* (which earned him an Oscar nomination); President Lyndon Johnson in *All the Way*, on Broadway and then in the HBO film (the stage role brought him his first Tony Award); and *Network's* Howard Beale, in London and on Broadway (which led to his second Tony). But in his signpost performances, he's played ordinary men who are suddenly dealt a very bad hand and respond by going to the dark side.

That throughline began way back in 1998, in an episode of Fox's *The X-Files* titled "Drive" (not to be confused with the 2011 film of the same name, in which Cranston also appeared). In a plot that can best be described as *Speed* meets *Scanners*, Cranston plays Patrick Crump, a nobody who falls victim to a U.S. Army project gone wrong.

As extreme low-frequency sound-waves bombard him, exerting rising pressure on his inner ear, the only thing that eases the pain is staying in constant, high-velocity movement. In desperation, Crump forces Agent Mulder (David Duchovny) at gunpoint into a pedal-to-the-metal westward road trip. On reaching the Pacific Ocean, his head literally explodes.

The episode, a revelation to watch all these years later, was written by one Vince Gilligan, then a coexecutive producer on *The X-Files* and subsequently showrunner-executive producer of *Breaking Bad*.

"We needed an actor who could be really nasty," he says of the exhausting casting process for that *X-Files* hour. "This actor had to play a guy who takes Mulder hostage. You don't like him, and yet at the end of the hour, when he dies, you have to feel sorry for him." It wasn't until Cranston showed up — on the Friday before the week shooting was to begin — that Gilligan found his man.

His instincts proved right about the actor, whose shaggy, mustachioed look Gilligan describes as "a menacing Gordon Lightfoot." He recalls, "When

to convey a mind under constant duress, burdened with guilt and fear, and vigilant against retribution by both the legal system and the criminal underworld.

"He has such a gift for showing me what he's thinking," Moffat says of his star. "I knew I was going to be asking him to show us that his character is thinking four or five things at the same time — that he might be lying, or pretending to lie, or bluffing while supposedly telling us what he's thinking, or maybe telling us what he really is thinking. All of those elements are present at particular moments, which is a huge ask of an actor.

"It's been a tremendous process and a genuine help to me as a writer to have an actor thinking that intelligently about what he's doing — about what

the shooting for 'Drive' ended, I thought, 'Man, that guy was great. I've got to work with him again.'"

Eight years later, Gilligan got his chance when he needed someone to play a chemistry teacher-turned-meth kingpin on his new AMC series, *Breaking Bad*. In the interim, he'd seen Cranston play *Seinfeld's* creepy dentist, Tim Whatley, as well as the hilariously frazzled dad on Fox's hit sitcom *Malcolm in the Middle*. All of Cranston's versatility came into play as the producer envisioned the man who would be Walter White.

"I thought, 'This is going to be a heavy, heavy role. It's going to have a lot of serious moments, hopefully some tearful moments. But you've got to leaven that with some comedy, so I need a guy who can pull that off too, who's the whole package,'" Gilligan remembers. "We read other actors for it — that's just part of the process — but in my mind it was Bryan."

En route to *Breaking Bad's* two Emmys for Outstanding Drama Series (2013 and '14, which Cranston, as a producer, shared with his peers) and Cranston's four trophies for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series (2008–10, 2014), Gilligan came to reconsider his own creation.

"Walter White was basically the good guy, and we were going to turn him into the bad guy," he says. "But as the show went on, watching Bryan's performance, we started wondering, 'Well, maybe he wasn't always the good guy. Maybe he was hiding all these darker aspects throughout, and he would never had let them out if he hadn't had this cancer diagnosis.' All these complex ideas come into play when you're blessed with an actor that good."

COMPARING THE ORDEALS OF WALTER WHITE AND MICHAEL DESIATO, CRANSTON SAYS, "IT'S A DIFFERENT SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES. BUT THE STAKES ARE INCREDIBLY HIGH [FOR BOTH], AND OF COURSE THAT'S WHAT ATTRACTS ME — DAMAGED CHARACTERS WHO ARE TRYING TO FIND THEIR WAY OUT OF THEIR SITUATION."

He's no stranger to adversity himself. Born in Hollywood in 1956, the middle child of three, Cranston grew up in the L.A. suburb of Canoga Park, enduring what he's called a "challenging" youth. When he was eleven, his father walked out, after which his mother descended into alcoholism and the family lost its home.

As a young man, he initially studied law enforcement at a community college, but an acting class turned his head around. While working such jobs as security guard, waiter, loader of trucks, camera operator for a video-dating service, even ordained minister, he got the occasional acting gig on a commercial. Those jobs led to soap operas and scores of episodic appearances on primetime series that kept him busy and slowly raised his profile through the 1980s and '90s.

The hardscrabble childhood and peripatetic early years shaped Cranston in ways that still guide his attitude and ambition. As he says, "You don't see any prizefighter come out of a rich neighborhood, because they're not fighting to get out of anything."

That resolve helped ward off any mixed feelings he might have had about the history-making, career-defining role he played on *Breaking Bad* for sixty-two episodes over five years. "I just was steeped in the place of good fortune, thinking, 'Wow, what a break. This is fantastic, that I get to be this character!'" he recalls.

As for fears of being typecast, Cranston is philosophical — and pragmatic. "Everything in life is ephemeral. I've been doing this for such a long time that I have shallow roots — I plant my flag, or tree, it spreads a little bit, then I pull up stakes and move on."

He likens the actor to "the army brat of show business," noting, "Nothing is going to last very long, so get used to that. I look forward to diving in and being

incredibly intense and personal with the people I work with and then leaving, letting go of that — not white-knuckling it, but just allowing it to escape."

That helps explain why he kept busy with side projects, even during *Breaking Bad*. The shorter run of a cable series, relative to broadcast-network shows, is one reason he signed on to *Your Honor*. The schedule gives him more than half the year to tend to his thriving film and theater career, as well as to the projects that come via his Moonshot Entertainment production company.

DESPITE HIS STARDOM, CRANSTON STILL APPROACHES HIS CAREER WITH THE APPETITE AND MODESTY OF AN UP-AND-COMER. SO IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT GILLIGAN SEES IN HIM AN ETERNAL JOURNEYMAN.

"All the great ones, it seems, have a humility and this... work ethic," Gilligan observes. "They keep their nose to the grindstone and treat everyone with respect. Bryan feels like it took a lot to get here, and he wants to keep learning and keep working, because once you start coasting — taking it for granted and treating people badly — you've lost it. He'll never lose it because he's never going to be that guy."

And Cranston is generous with the wisdom he's accumulated. On the *Your Honor* set, he's been a kind of sensei to costar Hunter Doohan.

"He's the most down-to-earth guy," Doohan enthuses. "He's such a generous actor. I think he truly gave me the performance. Everyone has told me how lucky I am to have gotten this as my first big project. They tell me it all starts with the number one [on the call sheet — i.e., the star], and Bryan totally sets the tone. Everyone has been great, because when he is on set, and he's who he is, no one else can be a problem."

For Cranston, such nurturing is a moral dictate. "Raised in a poor environment, I didn't know what I wanted to do," he recalls. "I stumbled around until I landed on this, and it became a passion. I feel it's incumbent on me to extend a hand to the next generation, and if I can help them to be more compassionate or empathetic and giving of themselves, it's better for society. If it helps someone individually, then that's fantastic."

When *Your Honor* finally wraps, Cranston will head back to his California home. He says there's nothing on his docket at the moment, but that's not likely to be the case for long. Till then, he'll always have his sourdough. ☺

Your Honor, produced by CBS Studios in association with King Size Productions, is available for streaming on Showtime and all partner platforms. Its executive producers include Peter Moffat, Robert and Michelle King, Bryan Cranston, James Degus and Edward Berger.



Cranston as the troubled judge of *Your Honor*



PBS/PHOTOFEST; ANTHONY TIEULI

John Neville and Susan Hampshire in *The First Churchills*



Even in the streaming age, Americans who savor the best in British drama are still gathering 'round the telly as the weekend wanes. Appointment viewing since 1971, PBS's *Masterpiece* — home of *Downton Abbey*, *Sherlock* and so much more — enters its second half-century with its renowned commitment to stories that, in the words of its executive producer, explore "emotional truth and the great themes of life."

A HALF-CENTURY OF SUNDAYS

BY JACQUELINE CUTLER

On Sunday evenings at nine, the clarion call of trumpets summons viewers throughout the land: PBS's *Masterpiece* is about to commence.

While the best television themes instantly bring viewers into a show's universe, those first notes of Jean-Joseph Mouret's *Fanfare-Rondeau* do more; they set expectations. The audience hearing them knows an intelligent drama awaits.

The country's longest-running primetime drama series marks its fiftieth anniversary on January 10. An anthology of the best that British television has to offer — with an occasional national exception (a Norwegian show will be part of the new season) — *Masterpiece* has become very much a staple of American culture. Its programs — educational yet entertaining, familiar yet foreign — offer a welcome respite from the world's chaos.

"In spite of the fact that roughly 250 years ago we fought and won our independence from England, for fifty years *Masterpiece* has kept the British

flag flying in this country — and what I mean by that is British drama talent," says Rebecca Eaton, *Masterpiece*'s longtime executive producer and now executive producer at large. "It is hugely important in our culture. There have always been British cultural influences — various Brits who would come over to make movies — but not so much in television."

When *Masterpiece* launched in 1971 with *The First Churchills* (the story of Sir Winston Churchill's seventeenth-century ancestors), British accents were rarely heard on American television. Viewers were more likely to pick up a Southern drawl from *Hee Haw*, *The Beverly Hillbillies* or *Mayberry, R.F.D.* But as the country changed, so did TV.

Eaton was at the forefront of that change, thanks

Rebecca Eaton



For more on Rebecca Eaton, see *Foundation Interviews*, page 66.



Jean Marsh and Gordon Jackson in *Upstairs, Downstairs*



Derek Jacobi in *I, Claudius*



PBS/PHOTOFEST; BBC/PHOTOFEST

Damian Lewis and Gina McKee in *The Forsyte Saga*



Martin Freeman and Benedict Cumberbatch in *Sherlock*



Helen Mirren and Tom Bell in *Prime Suspect*



Jim Carter and Phyllis Logan in *Downton Abbey*

to some excellent timing. Boston-born and California-raised, she graduated from Vassar with an English degree in 1969, when "we were all determined to change the world, and believed we could," as she puts it. "With the war in Vietnam ending, civil rights laws being passed and the women's movement on the rise, public broadcasting looked to be one of the places to do it."

The daughter of a stage actress and an English professor, Eaton took an internship at the BBC, which led her back to WGBH, the Boston public television station. There she worked on various radio and television projects, eventually becoming executive producer of *Masterpiece* in 1985. "In my early days, we screened shows and picked the ones we wanted to do," she says. "They were not all masterpieces, by the way. We were pretty much the only buyer [of British dramas] in this country at the time, and we would pick the best."

Best, of course, is a subjective term. So how did she know a project was *Masterpiece* worthy? Eaton answers in personal terms. "I used to ask my mother, 'How will I know who I want to marry?'" she recalls. "And she said, 'You will know.' It is a very deep gut reaction to something. If you have read enough scripts and seen enough drama, you can tell."

During its half-century, *Masterpiece's* signature dramas have included: *Upstairs, Downstairs*; *I, Claudius*; *The Forsyte Saga*; *Sherlock* and *Prime Suspect*. Along the way, the series has won eighty-three Emmy Awards and eighteen Peabodys as well as seven Golden Globes — and has been nominated for two Oscars.

As vaunted as these programs are, when *Downton Abbey* premiered in January 2011, *Masterpiece* soared to new heights. The soapy, six-season drama aired in 240 territories, meaning there are very few places where someone has not seen Maggie Smith's Dowager Countess cock an eyebrow and deliver such delicious barbs as, "Don't be defeatist, dear. It is very middle-class."

The character was inspired by women known over the years to *Downton*



Julian Fellowes



Susanne Simpson

creator Julian Fellowes. "If you are my age, you are the child of someone who went through the war," he says. "I was born in '49, four years after the war finished. In that generation, in every background, families were held together by the women. They had to make sure the houses stayed functional and the kids went to school. It was a generation of tremendously strong women. I had a committee of great-aunts who had all been through this. I loved them; they were very tough human beings."

Downton took off immediately in Britain when it debuted in fall 2010, and *Masterpiece* was the natural home for it stateside. Eaton and her colleagues "had a real understanding of what they were selling," Fellowes notes. "You want to be sure [program buyers] understand the product and who the market and the audience will be. We were in safe hands when we went into the kingdom of *Masterpiece*."

Initially, though, Eaton turned it down. When a few staffers gathered in the screening room at WGBH, Susanne Simpson, *Masterpiece's* current executive producer, recalls twice urging Eaton to sign. "I said to Rebecca, 'If you don't take this, I'll quit,'" Simpson remembers. "And she said, 'If I can get it for the right price, I'll think about it.'"

Back in the U.K., the groundswell kept growing. Graydon Carter, then editor of *Vanity Fair*, assigned a photo shoot of Elizabeth McGovern, who

Some had performed Shakespeare to acclaim. For others, it was their first paid acting job. Whether journeymen or novices, *Masterpiece* changed the trajectory of these actors' careers.

MASTER PLAYERS



DANIEL RADCLIFFE

The first Harry Potter film was still two years away when Daniel Radcliffe, then nine, debuted in *David Copperfield*. During shooting, he wandered off set to peer into a fishpond. Maggie Smith became a champion of the young actor during production of the Dickens classic, and when Warner Bros.

was casting the young wizard, she pushed for him.



LAURA CARMICHAEL

The actress best known as *Downton Abbey's* Lady Edith had been doing office work and had just been hired to perform on a cruise ship when the audition for this Julian Fellowes project came up. Her mother warned her about giving up a nice steady job for the chance at some TV show.



BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH

Though he'd been working steadily, the actor won his first major award, an Emmy, for *Sherlock*. Soon, a worldwide fan club, "The Cumberbitches," sprang up. When some members camped outside a Pasadena, California, hotel to catch a glimpse of him, he acknowledged, "It's kind of extraordinary and a little bit unnerving."



KENNETH BRANAGH

When he landed his first series lead on *Wallender*, Branagh was amazed at the global reaction to his role as the existentialist Swedish detective. "You suddenly find yourself in a remote part of the world — in a country town in Australia or somewhere," he says in Rebecca Eaton's memoir,

"and someone comes up to tell you they saw you in *Masterpiece*."



GLENDA JACKSON

Masterpiece was only in its second year when Jackson — already lauded for her stage and film work — shaved her head to play the queen in *Elizabeth R*. The actress ends a twenty-seven-year hiatus from the show (during which she focused on public affairs and served in British

Parliament) when she returns in January with *Elizabeth Is Missing*. Her first *Masterpiece* turn earned her an Emmy; she has already won a BAFTA for *Elizabeth Is Missing*. —J.C.

P IS FOR PARODY

"Monsterpiece Theatre"



The camera zooms in on a well-appointed sitting room, decorated with framed portraits of Muppets. The fellow in the smoking jacket — sitting in a leather chair alongside a crystal glass of milk — makes the parody clear. It's the gentle ribbing of one PBS stalwart by another: "Monsterpiece Theatre" on Sesame Street taking on the Sunday-night drama anthology.

Cookie Monster's chomping almost drowns out the *Masterpiece* theme. The burp is shocking yet funny as the fuzzy blue puppet does his take on Alistair Cooke, the show's original host.

Over the years, *Masterpiece* has inspired some sweet parodies. Late-night hosts have weighed in, with Seth Meyers — in a velvet jacket — presenting "Second Chance Theatre" from another leather chair. Jimmy Fallon's "Downton Sixbey" featured an involved skit with Brooke Shields as Lady Crawley and Fred Armisen cross-dressing as Lady Edith.

"I love them," PBS CEO Paula Kerger says of the takeoffs. "Parody is a great form of flattery. In more recent times, the explosion of *Downton Abbey* parodies was great — that is when I knew we had broken through. But you have to love Alistair Cookie. It is definitely my favorite." —J.C.

played Lady Crawley. The issue hit stands just as the show — shot at Highclere Castle, a seventeenth-century estate west of London — premiered on PBS.

"In the end, the series proved to be very much more successful than any of us expected," Fellowes acknowledges. "I don't want to sound too modest. We thought it was good, but it became a phenomenon in a way most people never see in their career, and that was a great treat. I loved all of that. It was terrific to be at the center."

The series was so popular that Fellowes was stopped on the street for autographs, an extraordinarily rare experience for a writer, even one who'd won an Oscar for *Gosford Park*. Perhaps the only principal player from that massive cast not instantly recognized is Phyllis Logan, who, as Mrs. Hughes, the housekeeper, wore drab clothes and an awful wig.

"People have said, 'I recognize your voice... do I know you?'" Logan relates. "And then they sort of work it out. I remember someone saying to me, 'You look about fifty years younger in real life!'"

Logan, who laughs easily, grows serious as she considers why a public broadcasting network in America is the perfect home for British dramas. "*Masterpiece* — what an eye and ear they have in picking the stuff!" she exclaims. "Just epic, classic dramas they put on. And really, it would make a lot of people's lives the poorer for not being able to tap into that. I hope it can go the next fifty years and give the public what they need and want."

The desire is clear: *Masterpiece* draws about 75 million viewers a year. As you'd expect, the streaming audience skews younger than broadcast, with 63 percent under sixty-five; those watching on broadcast television have a median age of sixty-nine.

"I am always surprised by the number of people who plan Sunday nights around *Masterpiece*," says PBS CEO Paula Kerger. "You know, you can watch at different times! But for many people it is a tradition of how to wind down the weekend. Others very much look forward to it being a family tradition, as it was for me growing up."

Kerger has fond memories of watching *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* as a girl with her family back in the 1970s. Still, she remains a bit awed by what she calls *Masterpiece's* "enduring quality" and the large audience it attracts. "When you have a series that has been on the air for a long time, you do run the risk of having it run its course," she explains. "But *Masterpiece* continues to reinvent itself and looks for new and fresh ways of telling stories. PBS, which has significantly fewer dollars than any other media organization, continues to punch above its weight."

The assumption some make that the *Masterpiece* audience is strictly women over sixty is wrong, Kerger adds, noting she meets many male fans — and young ones, too. While the series isn't trying to lure the PBS Kids audience, tweens and teens can tune in and fall in love with the stories of Louisa May Alcott and Jane Austen. Or with the likes of British-American heartthrob Jonah Hauer-King, who appeared as Laurie in *Little Women* and Paul Wilcox in *Howards End*. The actor also starred as Harry Chase in the more recent *World on Fire*, which is expected to return for a second season. Though



Paula Kerger

Jonah Hauer-King in *World on Fire*



Jenna Coleman in *Victoria*

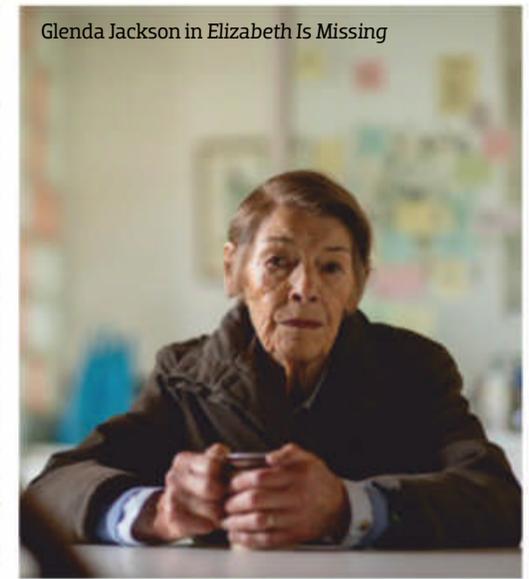
AARON CLAMAGE; BEN BLACKALL/MAMMOTH SCREEN; PBS/PHOTOFEST



Robson Green and Tom Brittney in *Grantchester*



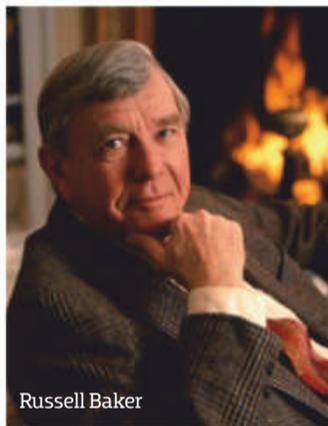
Rachel Shenton and Nicholas Ralph in the new *All Creatures Great and Small*



Glenda Jackson in *Elizabeth Is Missing*



Alistair Cooke



Russell Baker



Laura Linney



Alan Cumming

all are period dramas, he appreciates their timelessness.

"For me, *Little Women* is about what it means to be a young person becoming an adult, what it means to be a family," Hauer-King says. "Those are things everyone can relate to."

Sometimes, though, it's the lives so different from our own that draw us in, which could explain Americans' insatiable appetite for all things royal. "People do have an endless fascination with [Queen] Elizabeth and the crown," Logan observes. "It is bizarre enough to us that we have a royal family, so it must be doubly bizarre to Americans, all this pomp and circumstance!"

Beyond the pomp, of course, lies the personal palace intrigue. As the queen in three seasons of *Victoria*, Jenna Coleman has taken her character from a doll-toting innocent to a fiercely capable monarch. "What is so interesting in terms of the royal drama," she remarks, "is, you get to step behind the portraits and explore. My favorite scenes are when Victoria shuts the bedroom door: how does she behave?"

But no matter how engaging the stories, the success of *Masterpiece* has required programming execs stateside who understand the British sensibility, ensuring that the right projects are selected and properly promoted.

For Fellowes, working with *Masterpiece* was a congenial affair. "Rebecca and Susanne are so experienced in dealing with the English," he says. "We didn't have to overcome any of the barriers of [cultural] strangeness. We inherited from other people who had done business with them, and that worked."

But the *Masterpiece* format has been tweaked along the way. In 2008, the series, which had been known as *Masterpiece Theatre* since its beginning, was rebranded as *Masterpiece*. And the series was split into three: *Masterpiece Classic*, *Masterpiece Contemporary* and *Masterpiece Mystery!* In 2017, the *Classic* and *Contemporary* titles were discarded; *Masterpiece* reincorporated current and period stories, while *Masterpiece Mystery!* — with its tales of suspense and crime — has kept its own brand.

A staple of the series has been its hosts. Writer-broadcaster Alistair Cooke, a study in erudite elegance, was the first; he stayed for almost twenty-two years. Next up was *New York Times* columnist Russell Baker, who was not a natural on camera (he had trouble keeping his hands still, Eaton recalls). Actress Laura Linney has hosted *Masterpiece* since 2009.

Meanwhile, actor-singer-writer Alan Cumming has been hosting *Masterpiece Mystery!* since 2008. Asked to step into a job held previously by Diana Rigg and Vincent Price — whose photos adorn his dressing room —

Cumming says, "I thought it was so hilarious: 'Why are you asking me?' Then I thought, 'They're rebranding it, and I am new blood and an oddball choice — I'll give it a bit of mischief.' So I got it. And then I saw that it was fun as well. It is fun being mysterious, and it makes it a little less brittle to slightly camp it up."

Shows for the upcoming season were still in production at press time, but new episodes of *Grantchester* and *Unforgotten* are expected on *Masterpiece Mystery!* When *Masterpiece* returns January 3, Glenda Jackson will star in *Elizabeth Is Missing* as a woman in the grip of dementia. The gut-wrenching film, based on a novel by the same name by Emma Healey, takes viewers back to the 1940s as Jackson's character, Maud, wrestles with the demons haunting her.

On the January 10 anniversary, *Masterpiece* will premiere the first of seven new episodes of *All Creatures Great and Small*, which debuted in 1978 and ran for seven seasons. Based on James Herriot's beloved memoir of his days as a young veterinarian in the Yorkshire countryside, the new series promises to respect the original while infusing a fresh perspective.

"We wanted to root the characters in a sort of deeper psychological reality," says executive producer Colin Callender, whose other *Masterpiece* projects include *Wolf Hall* and *Little Women*. "We wanted to make the female characters fully formed and three-dimensional. We wanted to set the drama in the context of the financial challenges of the 1930s, and we wanted to embrace the regionality of it."

Now CEO of Playground Entertainment, a production company with offices in New York and London, Callender ran HBO's film division for twenty-two years, during which it won 132 Emmys. He knows when a project fits a specific brand. "There are some pieces where you know, 'The right home for this is *Masterpiece*,'" he says. "When something is presented under the *Masterpiece* banner, audiences look at it in a very particular way. The *Masterpiece* imprimatur has an impact."

That impact comes, in part, from attention to detail — from the selection of scripts to the sewing of silk-covered buttons on the impeccable period costumes. There is respect for story and character, resulting in the remarkable — viewers in the digital age choosing appointment viewing of a show that has lasted for half a century.

"They really expect the best — the best writing, the best acting," Simpson says of the audience. "What *Masterpiece* has been able to do is bring that kind of high-quality programming every week. I think of *Masterpiece* like great literature, which is really about emotional truth and the great themes of life: love, betrayal, death. *Masterpiece* helps people understand those truths, and that is why it endures." 📺

COLIN HUTTON/KUDOS/ITV/MASTERPIECE; ED MILLER/MARSAILI MAINZ; JEFFREY MACMILLAN FOR WGBH; MICHAEL LUTCH/MASTERPIECE

To portray Margaret Thatcher in *The Crown*, Gillian Anderson had to immerse herself in Britain's "Iron Lady," both mentally and physically. The strong-willed prime minister is "the toughest role I have ever played," reports the actress, who promises, "You still see it's me playing her" — underneath that famous halo of '80s hair.

BY **BENJI WILSON**

SCENE STEELER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **BEN WELLER**/TRUNKARCHIVE.COM



IN 2018, WHEN PETER MORGAN WAS WRITING SEASON FOUR OF *THE CROWN*, THE NETFLIX DRAMA THAT TRACES THE REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II HAD REACHED THE EARLY 1980S. OLIVIA COLMAN, OF COURSE, HAD BEEN PLAYING HER MAJESTY SINCE THE START OF SEASON THREE. BUT WHO, MORGAN WONDERED, WOULD TAKE ON THE MANTLE OF THE ERA'S OTHER DOMINANT PUBLIC FIGURE, THE SO-CALLED "IRON LADY"? WHO EVEN COULD?

"At some point," he muses, "it must have just crossed my mind: 'Hang on a minute. Couldn't Gillian, maybe, play that part?'"

The showrunner-executive producer-writer of *The Crown* was thinking of Gillian Anderson, the Emmy-winning star of Fox's long-running *The X-Files* whose credits also include the BBC series *The Fall* and Netflix's *Sex Education*. Anderson is also Morgan's partner.

"I remember looking at her and not mentioning it to her," Morgan continues, "yet scrutinizing and thinking, 'Actually in a certain light...'" He then owns up to his unspoken thought: "It's not a realization any boyfriend wants to come to."

That conclusion, however, has led to a potentially career-defining role.

"I must have said, 'Yes, I think I could do it,'" Anderson says. "Then Pete talked to [casting director] Nina Gold. He's been very vocal about the fact that if Nina had said, 'Oh, absolutely not — she's not anywhere on my list,' he probably would have come back to me and said, 'I'm sorry, I should have never brought it up to begin with.'"

Luckily, Gold had been thinking of Anderson all along. So, all that remained was for the actress to sign. But it was no small decision: apart from the queen herself, it's hard to think of a woman who looms larger over twentieth-century Britain, whose voice and silhouette and politics are better known or more polarizing, than Margaret Thatcher.

"People have very strong feelings about her," says Anderson, who was born in Chicago but spent her childhood in Britain. "So, the role was daunting — but at the same time, it felt like I had to do it. The opportunity to be on a series like *The Crown* and play such an iconic character was just too good to say no."

Playing a historical figure is a high-wire act, a precarious balance of impersonation and imagination. And anyone who's had an eye on global politics in the past forty years can summon an image of Thatcher, whether it's the bouffant halo of orange hair, the low breathy voice or the blue crepe power suit with matching power handbag. Thatcher has long been parodied in British comedy shows, in part because she was so instantly recognizable (she died in 2013), especially in comparison to her gray-suited, gray-haired, all-male cabinet.

Morgan admits he was concerned about putting his partner front and center. "You do slightly worry — there's no safety there. If she screwed it up, it'd be a horrible thing."

Anderson calls the role "the toughest I have ever played. But at the end of the day, it's not a Thatcher biopic.

The drama, by necessity, is seen through the prism of the crown. That's the nature of the stories that are told in the series."

She pauses, then changes tack. "Although I did go about the research as if it was a biopic or a feature called *Thatcher!* I read a lot, and I watched everything and listened to interviews and recordings to get her voice."

INDEED, THE CHALLENGE WAS BOTH MENTAL AND PHYSICAL. ANDERSON HAD TO UNDERSTAND THE WOMAN — BUT FIRST SHE NEEDED TO LOOK AND SOUND LIKE HER.

"There was a lot of discussion at the beginning about how we would do the teeth, because she had such noticeable teeth, and they weren't good for big portions of her career," Anderson says. "But any time we added something, whether it was a full-on prosthesis or just slightly discolored braces, it looked ridiculous."

Instead, she worked on holding her mouth so it would look like she really had those troublesome teeth. She also captured the tilt of the head and the husky voice to perfection.

"I worked with a couple of voice coaches who had very different techniques and eventually got there," she relates. "I've started to discover that I'm quite a shy actor. I'm more likely to underplay than to overplay. I kept being encouraged to go way over the top, even to pitch way up 'here' so that it was almost a parody. Then I could always pull it back."

Thatcher's voice and presentation were, Anderson points out, all part of a performance themselves. "She grew up in Lincolnshire [then a very rural area], but she certainly didn't sound like she grew up there. She took elocution lessons in school, though very early in her career, in her twenties and thirties, she had a very high-pitched voice. Not screechy, but if you were listening to her at a party conference, it would be quite grating."

Thatcher altered her voice to change how she was perceived. As she rose higher in government, her voice dropped and sounded more manly.

"She definitely worked on that.... Also, if you watch her interviews, you'll see she always smiled. She always kept this face" — Anderson pulls a benevolent grin — "whether it was a full smile or partial smile, it was how she delivered information. And she never got angry. She was always even-keeled, with a direct tone and very persuasive."

And, of course, this being *The Crown*, the prime minister's wardrobe was extensive. Anderson recalls "hundreds of costume fittings and extraordinary care given by the costume department." The aim always was to balance historical accuracy with items that worked on screen.

"It wasn't necessarily about modernizing what she wore, but we wanted it to feel like the designer was adding her personality into it," she explains. "That little twist, together with choosing historically accurate pieces, all went toward telling the right story throughout."

As for makeup, that department had to figure out "how to cover — or not to cover — my skin and freckles," she says, "because it's über HD." And the P.M.'s red power lipstick was a particular bone of contention. To find exactly the right shade, "they went through every pharmacy in town!" Anderson marvels.

And finally, there was that historic hair. In a 2013 survey by hair-care website Fabriah.com, Thatcher's oversized, sculpted coiffure was voted the fifth most influential hairstyle of the past fifty years.

"Of course it was a wig!" Anderson says of her own Crown crown. "There were two wigs, in fact. One is bigger. It took a really long time to get right. On the first camera test it was too dark, too dense and too big. Part of what they needed — other than adding lighter elements and reweaving — was actually removing some hair so that light got to come through it."

Taken all together, the transformation is astonishing — though never distracting.

"Pete was quite clear that they wanted something that felt natural, that didn't feel like a parody or an imitation. To do that, I had to maintain a certain element of self, so that you still see it's me playing her. That was okay."

To be sure, her Thatcher is a slow-burn delight. It's a quiet and unshowy performance, portraying the leader as a woman, a mother, a daughter and a workaholic who honed her beliefs through years of being underestimated.

She is also seen as part of a triptych of women, alongside the queen and the emerging figure of Princess Diana, played by Emma Corrin in season four (now streaming). As the 1970s draw to a close, Queen Elizabeth and her family are focused on safeguarding the line of succession by securing an appropriate bride for Prince Charles (Josh O'Connor), still unmarried at thirty. The nation, meanwhile, is beginning to feel the impact of Thatcher's divisive policies. At the same time, tensions arise with the queen as Thatcher leads the country into the Falklands War, generating conflict within the Commonwealth.

At every turn, Thatcher is the antagonist, while the queen remains the preserver of the status quo. Anderson says she started with a blank slate. "I knew the varying opinions about her. But when I was growing up, I wasn't paying much attention to politics."

IN 1979, THE YEAR THATCHER ASCENDED TO PRIME MINISTER, ANDERSON'S FAMILY MOVED FROM ENGLAND BACK TO THE STATES. THE FUTURE ACTRESS SPENT HER TEEN YEARS IN GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN; AT TWENTY-TWO, SHE MOVED TO NEW YORK. "IF I WAS HEARING ANYTHING POLITICAL AT THAT TIME," SHE SAYS, "IT WAS MORE TO DO WITH CARTER AND REAGAN."

In her research, Anderson looked past politics — Thatcher was a conservative who force-marched Britain toward a smaller state and a free-market economy — and found herself fascinated by the woman behind the policies.

"There were a lot of things that I was impressed by. Her ability to retain information was extraordinary. The fact that she really worked hard. And she was determined to 'put the "great" back into Great Britain,' as she once said. I think she really believed that."

Thatcher's singularity of purpose and clarity of person, together with the effects that her policies had on Britain, made her a hugely divisive figure. Morgan's writing and Anderson's performance, however, focus less on what she did and more on who she was.

A grocer's daughter raised in relative poverty, Thatcher lived a frugal life as she rose through her career. Elected to Parliament in 1959, she became the first woman leader of the Conservative Party in 1975 and, ultimately, Britain's first female prime minister and the longest-serving P.M. of the twentieth century. But she also had two children and a husband, Denis, whom she loved and cared for. Even as she was running the country, she continued to iron his shirts.

"At that time, to have that much responsibility as a woman leader — and to be a decidedly active parent and wife — was unique for someone in the public domain," says Anderson, who has three children of her own. "We're so used to that today. We're used to women being able to balance all those things. The fact that she was doing it back then, when it was so rare and there were so many things playing against her, is admirable."

Thatcher preached a fierce work ethic, and she practiced what she preached. "She grew up as a Methodist," Anderson says, "but she just believed in hard work and that anybody could get to where they wanted if they worked hard enough. It's quite something that she did it and got to where she was."

That, of course, put Thatcher in stark contrast with the queen, who held her position because of who she was, not what she did. Yet the women were virtually the same age and achieved similar prominence.

The Crown originated in Morgan's Tony- and Olivier-winning 2013 play *The Audience*, which depicts the queen's weekly sessions with her various prime



Anderson as Thatcher, who embraced her Soviet nickname, the "Iron Lady"

DES WILLIE/NETFLIX

ministers. The TV series, produced for Netflix by Left Bank Pictures and Sony Pictures Television, presents these as austere, charged occasions, full of loaded words and raised eyebrows.

But that was not the case on set, Anderson says. "The biggest challenge on any one day was to keep a straight face, of course, with Olivia Colman. She's just a blast. And not to succumb to the desire to entertain or to crack her up, because it's counterproductive and distracting. But, oh my gosh, it was tempting! We had to have our wrists slapped on a few occasions, especially as we got closer to the end of the season. You start getting into episode-ten audience scenes, and you're doolally [temporarily deranged] by then."

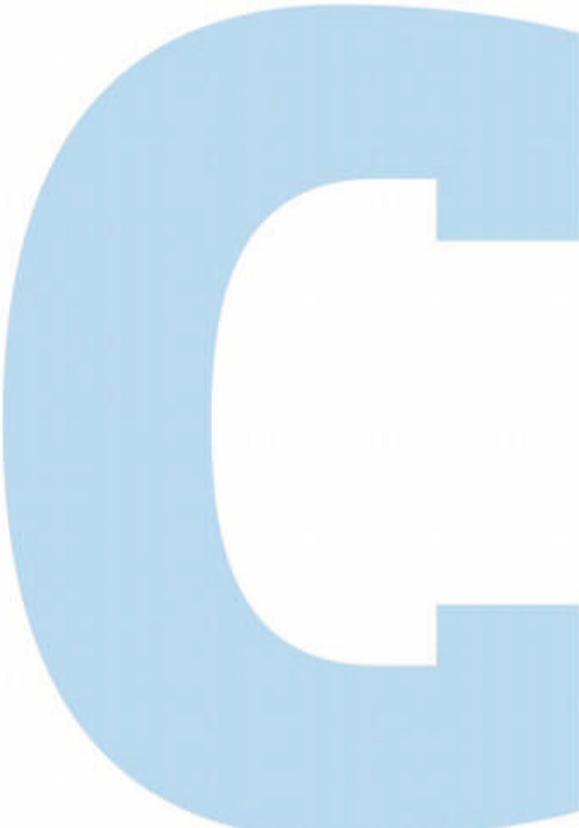
THE BIG QUESTION REMAINS: DID ANDERSON AND MORGAN DARE TO DISCUSS HER EFFORTS WHEN THEY GOT HOME?

"We discovered that the most helpful thing would be if we stayed out of each other's way and kept our opinions to ourselves," Anderson says. "When I read the script, I kept my mouth shut, and if there was anything that I had feelings or thoughts about, I would take them to his researchers or his writing team. If he had thoughts about my performance when he saw dailies, he would keep his mouth shut and talk to the director. On the whole, I think we did pretty damn well."

Morgan agrees. Anderson's brilliant performance "gets under your skin," he says. "It's done from the inside out, and you're left with an extremely complex and rounded picture of this undoubtedly fascinating woman." 🗨️







[Rebecca Eaton]

AN ANY TELEVISION PRODUCER CLAIM A FIFTY-YEAR CAREER, LET ALONE A HALF-CENTURY RUN AT THE SAME STATION — INCLUDING THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AT THE HELM OF THE SAME SHOW? REBECCA EATON CAN. SHE JOINED PUBLIC STATION WGBH IN 1970 AND BECAME EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF ITS ESTEEMED DRAMA ANTHOLOGY SERIES, MASTERPIECE, IN 1985. AND THOUGH SHE STEPPED DOWN FROM THAT POST LATE LAST YEAR, SHE REMAINS THE SERIES' EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AT LARGE.

"For me, an Anglophile bookworm and the daughter of an English professor and an actress, *Masterpiece* has been my ideal professional home," she said, when passing the baton to her longtime colleague, Susanne Simpson.

Indeed, over the decades, Eaton has offered programs to millions of PBS viewers like herself, who share a love of language and stories that illuminate the human condition. Almost all of that programming has been British, and

in recent years has included *Downton Abbey* and *Sherlock*, which brought never-before-seen ratings and profits to PBS.

But as Eaton makes clear, *Masterpiece* — which marks its fiftieth anniversary on January 10 — has always held headier goals. Her job, she says, has been a search for "a well-told story that shows somebody learning, changing, dealing with adversity and finding a way through.... Redemption, love, resolution — I think

the world needs a little bit more of these."

In March 2019, Eaton spoke at length with **Adrienne Faillace** for *The Interviews: An Oral History of Television*, a program of the Television Academy Foundation. The following is an edited excerpt of their conversation. The entire interview can be seen at [TelevisionAcademy.com/Interviews](https://www.televisionacademy.com/interviews). For more on Eaton and *Masterpiece*, see "A Half-Century of Sundays" on page 56 in this issue.

Q: What were some of your interests when you were young?

A: Reading. Reading. Reading. I couldn't read enough British literature.

Q: What was it about the British authors that appealed to you?

A: I loved the language, the writing. I loved the strong heroines of the Jane Austen novels. And things happened in beautiful rooms, with a bowl of flowers on the table. It just spoke to me.

At Vassar College, I majored in English literature and followed my love of British things. After Vassar, I went to work for the BBC in London because I wanted to live there, not because I wanted to be in broadcasting. I worked for BBC Shortwave Radio, the world service, on a show about innovations in science [Science in Action].

When I arrived back in the U.S. in late 1970, I had to get a job, and there was this new thing happening called PBS. And I heard there was a BBC-type network just being born, with a radio component to it called NPR.

I had an introduction to the head of the BBC in New York, and she introduced me to the heads of radio in Boston, Washington and San Francisco. The general manager of the radio station in Boston, WGBH, said, "Come in and we'll talk." My first producing job was for an arts magazine show at WGBH-FM, and I was on my way.

Later, a friend of mine, who had been a production assistant on a nightly, live community-access TV show said, "I'm leaving. You might want to work on this show." This is now 1971 or '72. The show was called *Catch 44*. The most important part about my getting that job was first, learning live television production, and second, the guy I worked for, Henry Becton, became general manager and eventually president of WGBH. He eventually hired me to be executive producer of *Masterpiece Theatre*.

Q: How did your move to Masterpiece Theatre occur?

A: Henry had asked me to read some scripts that were coming in and tell him what I thought, so I would read them and give him writeups. The executive producer at *Masterpiece* at that point, Joan Wilson, was ill; it turned out that she had pancreatic cancer and died within a year. Henry had been test-driving me in this new field. At this point I was married, and my husband, Paul Cooper, and I talked it over. I thought, "Should I apply for this? I don't really want this job."

Q: Why didn't you want it?

A: Because it was an executive job. It wasn't producing — it wasn't making anything. It was



sitting there, giving money to people to make things. It sounded boring. But we were thinking about starting a family. Paul was a sculptor, and I was a television producer. I would be the one to have the outside job, and he would be working at home. But we would reverse roles if we were to be so blessed as to have a family. We thought, "Well, there's less traveling, there's less stress. You just sit at a desk and make decisions. Maybe you should try for it." So I threw my hat in the ring.

I had been a *Masterpiece Theatre* watcher. I'd loved the show. I had been a huge *Upstairs, Downstairs* addict, watched every episode, watched them with my mother — she loved them, and she loved [host] Alistair Cooke.

At that point, Mobil Corporation was the sole funder of *Masterpiece* and *Mystery!* — they were two separate British drama series. And I remember flying home from meeting the people from Mobil, feeling really ill and thinking, "Maybe I shouldn't do this job." Then it occurred to me that I might be pregnant, so I went to the doctor. As I was getting ready to leave work one day, the phone rang. It was the doctor's office and they said, "Mrs. Cooper, good news — you're pregnant!"

My husband was in the car; I went out and said, "Guess what?" and he was thrilled. I said, "Forgot my coat," so I went back in, the phone rang, and it was Henry Becton, calling to say he'd like to offer me the job of executive producer of *Masterpiece Theatre*. I said, "Henry, I just got off the phone with the doctor. I'm pregnant." There was silence, for about one or two nanoseconds. Then he said, "That's great; we'll figure it out."

I went outside again and said, "Henry just

offered me the job of executive producer." Paul was stunned. I said, "I forgot my coat." He said, "Don't go back in there. Don't answer the phone anymore!"

Those two things happened on the same day, and my life hasn't been the same since. My daughter was born about eight months later, and I started the job a month later, very ill. I had a difficult pregnancy.

My learning curve at *Masterpiece* was straight up. Henry taught me on the job how it worked between *Masterpiece*, PBS, Mobil, British broadcasters, British independents.... I feel like I've been running as fast as I can ever since.

Q: So how does it all work?

A: Well, let's start at the beginning. *Masterpiece Theatre*, as it was called in 1971 (it's called *Masterpiece* now), is a primetime PBS television series populated by the best of British drama. In the beginning it was fully funded by Mobil Corporation. It was offered to PBS through WGBH, which is one of the local stations of the PBS network, probably the most prolific of the public television stations.

Masterpiece was, in the beginning, acquisitions of BBC drama. BBC made lots of drama, so my predecessor — and me, in the early days — would just screen them and choose which ones were the best. Mobil gave a tremendous amount of money to WGBH to do this, which would then be used to license the rights to air the programs in this country for a limited time.

Shortly after I got there, things changed and the British companies started needing international partners to make things — they wanted to share the expenses. And it wasn't just the BBC anymore [supplying programs]; it was also ITV, a commercial network. There really were only four networks in England — BBC had BBC1, which is very mainstream, and BBC2, which is a bit more like PBS; ITV, very commercial, and Channel 4, which was a sort of a combination of BBC2 and ITV. Most material came from the BBC, but now there was drama being offered from all of those places, needing money. So things got busier.

Q: What did you look for when making your selections?

A: We've never had focus groups at *Masterpiece*; we've had seat-of-your-pants, gut-instinct groups, which have mostly been me and various colleagues. In the beginning I would choose which programs to do, usually in consultation with Henry Becton, because he had a better sense of the audience.

Q: But you lost the underwriting of *Mystery!* when Mobil announced in 1995 that it would stop funding the show at the end of that season. And in 2002 Mobil said it would stop supporting *Masterpiece* as of 2004.

A: They certainly did. Over the years Mobil would write checks every year, and *Masterpiece* and *Mystery!* were fully funded. But there was new administration at Mobil around this time; Exxon was buying Mobil. It was a very different corporate culture. The people who had seen the huge, positive effect of having the association with *Masterpiece* and PBS were gone, so things got tricky.

PBS, at that point, was reluctant to pay for *Mystery!* because they had never had to pay for *Masterpiece* or *Mystery!* before and were using their funds to do other programs, which were all American. We were the outlier. We were British.

This is something I have always felt about *Masterpiece*: we are not exactly in the PBS mission. PBS's mission was to do American television, and we are the inconvenient truth that this British series is hugely successful. It came to them free at the beginning, and it developed this incredibly loyal audience, which grew and grew. Then all of a sudden, there isn't the Mobil underwriting and PBS has to recognize, we have this very successful show — how are we going to pay for it?

Q: Ultimately PBS decided not to fund *Mystery!*...

A: Yes, so we had to meld the two and have *Mystery!* become a part of *Masterpiece*. Then, Mobil decided they were out of here [and stopped funding *Masterpiece*]. That was a very dark day. *Masterpiece* was then completely dependent on PBS, which didn't have the money to fund us in the way we had been. It was very difficult to find an underwriter, because Mobil's association was so strong. We suffered through this for a few years. Then I realized, this ship is going to go down and it's going to go down on my watch.

I decided we needed to rebrand the series. We got some money from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and we hired a consultant, Bob Knapp, who spoke to critics, PBS stations, viewers, actors and Hollywood people to see how we were being perceived.

He came back and told us that we were the jewel in the crown, but a dusty jewel. The show is hard to find, he said, and people don't really know what we are. They think of the

show as something their parents watched. They think they need an advanced degree to watch it! And they think they need to be on the couch on Sunday nights for twelve weeks.

We had to make ourselves more clear; we had to make it easier to watch. But people loved the programming! Bob said not to change the programming. So, we changed the window dressing.

We changed the name from *Masterpiece Theatre* to *Masterpiece* to make it less intimidating. We changed the on-air look. We hired hosts [and created *Masterpiece Classic*, *Masterpiece Contemporary* and *Masterpiece Mystery!*]. We made it very clear: this is *Masterpiece Classic* — that's the frock dramas. This is *Masterpiece Mystery!* — those are the mysteries that you like. It's all on Sunday night. It's still about forbidden love, real estate, beautiful dresses, beautiful houses. Still great writing.

And it worked. We got an underwriter. Viking River Cruises, as they were called then, came in the year after that. Then lightning struck twice. First in the form of *Sherlock* with Benedict Cumberbatch. And four months later, with *Downton Abbey*. We were just creating a social media department that could handle what was coming, and suddenly things blew wide open.

Q: Tell us about *Sherlock*.

A: I was at the BBC one day when somebody said, "We're thinking of doing another *Sherlock Holmes*." I asked, "Who's writing it?" They said, "Steven Moffat." I came back to the station and mentioned this project at a staff meeting. Our postproduction producer said, "Steven Moffat! Do you know who that is?" I didn't, and she said he wrote *Dr. Who*, the new version — he and Mark Gatiss were producing it. So we went back and said, "We should probably have another look at this."

We knew Benedict because he had been in lots of our productions. They cast him to be

Sherlock and Martin Freeman to be Watson. The two of them together, with Steven and Mark's scripts — I just couldn't stop smiling watching it.

Q: How did *Downton Abbey* get on your radar?

A: It was first offered to us just as an idea. Julian Fellowes had written a couple pages describing the plot and the characters. Carnival Films, the British producer, had asked if he would be interested in doing another version of *Gosford Park* or *Upstairs, Downstairs*. That's what *Downton* is — it is new, but it's a combination of *Upstairs, Downstairs* and *Gosford Park*. Julian apparently went away and came back with this document.

That came to us at the same time that we had already said yes to a new *Upstairs, Downstairs* by Heidi Thomas, who writes *Call the Midwife*. I thought, "Well, I'm not sure we should do two very similar stories." One is set in the city — *Upstairs, Downstairs* is in Eaton Place in London — and *Downton Abbey* was in the countryside. I turned down *Downton Abbey*.

Then it was offered everywhere else in this country. ITV had said they were going to make it, but it went to NBC, CBS, HBO, BBC America, and everybody said no. Then it got close to production time, and Simon Curtis — the director and a friend — called me because [his wife] Elizabeth McGovern had been cast in it, and they had just heard that Maggie Smith had been cast. Simon and I always talk very frankly, and he told me that Elizabeth thought this could be quite good. I credit Simon and Elizabeth with saying I should do this.

So then we came in, arguably on the late side of *Downton*, and negotiated a deal for its future episodes — not knowing there would be any — but we locked it up at a given rate for as long as they made it, which turned out to be a very good decision.

Q: So did you go overseas for table reads, meetings...?

A: Yes, I would go to the set. It was so much fun to be with that group because they were having an awfully good time. Michelle Dockery, Dan Stevens, Joanne Froggatt... these were young actors. They didn't know what was going to become of this. And Penelope Wilton and Jim Carter were serious, very experienced actors.

So there was a mixture of the old and the new, the upstairs and the downstairs, all in this beautiful house, which is a real house. It's not in the National Trust — it's privately owned. And they really do shoot in the drawing room, the hall, the grounds, one of the bedrooms... There they are, in this beautiful house with a lot of





time to kill. So it's great fun to go. Everybody's dying for entertainment and wants to talk, and we had a lovely time.

The table reads would be great. Julian would always address everybody. They had wonderful historical advisors who would make sure they dressed properly, sat properly, ironed the newspaper properly, used the right fork. They were doing it right, and they knew they were on to something good. Then it began to get bigger and bigger and bigger.

The first year of *Downton*, Michelle, Dan and Elizabeth McGovern came over, and we went on a [publicity] tour. It was so exciting. Michelle had never been in a limousine before. We went to Seattle, San Francisco.... It was so much fun to see it through their eyes and to not know — but to bet — that suddenly it was going to mushroom. A few years later they had to come back under assumed names because they had to hide from the fans.

Q: Many of them were unknowns at the start, particularly in America.

A: Completely unknown. Robert James-Collier, who played the evil Thomas, is a wonderful actor and loved coming to this country. He said, "In America, people will walk across the street to tell you how much they love you and your series. In England, they walk across the street to tell you how much they didn't like it."

Q: Why was *Downton* so successful?

A: I have a theory.... I think it was perfect timing, because recurring series were getting very hot. Also it is a story of community. The community happens to be the people who live in this house — one half are in service to the other, but they need each other. And with the exception of a

couple of evildoers, they care about each other.

That resonated hugely with people, because there isn't that much community in the way we live now. There's more and more fragmentation. People communicate digitally or pictorially; they don't think, "We're in this place and we're all going to be here for the next twenty-five or thirty years." The people of *Downton* had been in the same place and would continue to be, although that way of life was under threat.

Also, Julian is a very generous-hearted man who likes positive outcomes and can write wittily. He and Maggie [Smith] must be the same person on some DNA level, because he can write so perfectly for her. He can be funny and he can also deal with hard, tragic things. But his people are always trying to do the right thing. And there isn't a lot of that in popular entertainment at the moment.

Q: What is the legacy of *Downton Abbey*?

A: First of all, it emboldened commercial television in the U.K. to do costume drama. They really hadn't done it before.

It also spawned a renewed interest in British costume drama. I think *The Crown* happened because of *Downton*. The redoing of *Poldark*. The doing of *Victoria* — all of these subsequent *Downton*-like series are its legacy. It created the idea that you can take a bunch of unknown, young actors and put them in a big ensemble cast, anchored by some really good senior actors, and it will flourish.

It set a model. It wasn't a terribly expensive show to do. It got more expensive when it got popular, because the salaries went up. But it was set in one location, using all the furniture there [at Highclere Castle]. And the sets — the downstairs and some of the bedrooms — were all done in Ealing Studios, forty-five minutes away.

And Julian wrote twenty really memorable characters — some of them are very funny, some are evil, some are beautiful, some are funny-looking. He revitalized the big ensemble show with different stories that you can weave together. He says he learned to do that from American television; he used to watch the likes of *The West Wing* and loved that.

Q: *Masterpiece* is coming up on its fiftieth anniversary. Why has it lasted so long?

A: It's lasted because PBS has taken care of it. PBS is not a commercial network who has to see the ratings every Monday morning and see how much money the sponsors are making. It has been a place where things can flourish.

Masterpiece has gone through thin times,

when another network would have killed it — and maybe should have killed it. However, if PBS had killed it in the thin years, we wouldn't have been there for *Sherlock* and *Downton*. We wouldn't have become what we are now, which is the highest-rated show on PBS. And a show that makes money for PBS.

This is a little-known fact about *Masterpiece*: it is profitable for the local stations because they can run local ads around an episode, as well as the national underwriting from Viking. The station gets that money. And their members say they join public television because of *Masterpiece*. It is iconic. In many ways, it defines public television. It's really hard to brand yourself these days, but we have a brand that's been there for all these years.

Also, the quality of the productions has consistently been very high. That's what we've tried very hard to do, to always keep the quality — particularly of the writing, the acting and the production design — very high. It's arguably a niche of excellence.

Q: What do you see as a common thread through its fifty years of programs?

A: In choosing programs, I look for something affirming, inspirational, illuminating about the human condition. This sounds very grand, and I probably couldn't defend it for every single show. But if there is a well-told story that shows somebody learning, changing, dealing with adversity and finding a way through... Redemption, love, resolution — I think the world needs a little bit more of these.

It isn't my show. I didn't create it. I'm the third executive producer, but actually I have been producing it longer than anybody else; it was fifteen years old when I started, and it's now about to be fifty. It is my life's work. And it amazes me how many people come up to me and say, "Thank you for allowing us to see this; it's meant so much to us...."

It's just a TV show. But they have felt something from it, which is hugely rewarding and circles back to the person I was in 1970, '71, when I started in television and we all were going to make the world a better place. Correct mistakes and fix things. Having a sense that a television show could make things better for people, even emotionally or personally, is very rewarding. ☺

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TV School in Session

In virtual seminar, educators track industry trends.

WHILE 2020 HASN'T had many silver linings, Faculty Seminar: The Conference was happily one of them. A regular highlight of the fall schedule of the Television Academy Foundation, the seminar has in the past drawn college educators from across the country for an extreme closeup on the industry, including in-person discussions with heavy hitters and tours of studios and other production facilities.

This year, of course, the pandemic prevented such a format, but it did permit the Foundation to take on — and surmount — a new challenge.

"As with all things 2020, we found ourselves in a position to reinvent our presentation and drill down to its essence," said Jodi Delaney, executive director of the Foundation. "In this case, that meant providing faculty with important, up-to-date information they can take back to their classrooms. What is usually an in-person experience was distilled into conversations that we carefully designed to meet the needs of our audience."

Those conversations took place virtually across three evenings, October 26–28, under the new moniker Faculty Seminar: The Conference and drew some 200 instructors. Tina Perry, president of OWN, kicked things off as the keynote speaker. Subsequent panels explored such topics as live television production, casting, production design, creativity during a crisis and television's depiction of homelessness.

Covering a broad range of topics was a priority, noted Foundation chair Madeline Di Nonno. "We need to make sure



Speaking to educators about TV's depiction of homelessness were (top, from left): David Ambroz, Disney Television; Kat Lilley, Family Promise advisory council; Kevin Ryan, CEO, Covenant House; (middle) Lyric Ross, *This Is Us*; Lucien Christian Adderley, *David Makes Man*; Kay Oyegun, *This Is Us*; (bottom) Richard "Byrd" Wilson, *David Makes Man*.



OWN president Tina Perry

that we're serving the faculty who are teaching the next generation," she explained. "We asked ourselves, 'What are the new areas that are important to our industry?' We want to stay on the cutting edge and provide access to industry leaders who can give faculty insight into important trends."

The discussions resonated for Daniel Jacobo, a professor of film at Chaffey College in southern California and a first-time seminar attendee. "The lineup really spoke to me," he said. "It was about what's happening right now."

Though one returning attendee, Lisa Thrasher, had enjoyed the networking aspect of previous seminars, this year's virtual set-

ting had its own benefits. "I actually think it's a great way to connect with people," said Thrasher, an assistant professor of film business and producing at Virginia's George Mason University and an independent producer. "I can catch up on what they're doing, then reach out to them later and say, 'Hey, that was great.'"

While all of the panels were well received, many attendees found "Power of TV: Homelessness in Storytelling" particularly moving in its discussion of how the medium can bring attention to homeless youth. TV pros on the panel — which was made available for public viewing, free of charge — included Lucien Christian Adderley and Richard "Byrd" Wilson, writers on OWN's *David Makes Man*; Kay Oyegun, a writer-producer on NBC's *This Is Us*; and Lyric Ross, an actress on *This Is Us*. Moderating was David Ambroz, executive director of corporate social responsibility at Walt Disney Television.

Ambroz told listeners that he had experienced eleven years of homelessness while growing up in New York City. Oyegun also revealed that she had been

homeless. "I was eleven years old when my mother, brother and I became homeless," she said. "We were homeless for about a year and a half. We went from sleeping on the floors of relatives to sleeping in a car to sleeping on the floors of friends of family before my mother was able to move from working at a gas station to nursing school."

On *This Is Us*, Ross plays a teenager, Deja, who moves from homelessness to the foster system to adoption. The show, Oyegun explained, seeks to put a spotlight on adoption and nontraditional families. "We are exploring systemic injustice from an individual level," she said. "Circumstance, as opposed to human weakness [leads to homelessness]. Helping people understand that is very important to me."

On *David Makes Man*, a brilliant young teen (Akili McDowell as David) struggles in the projects of South Florida. "Housing insecurity is a reality for many people," Wilson said. "But we're taking into account the things that make the problem worse: being Black, young, gay or transsexual. We're humanizing these people."

Adderley agreed, saying, "We're making sure that we see people as human before we see them as homeless. Often, we think about a person's circumstance without thinking of the person. We want to get to a place of compassionate empathy rather than sympathy."

"I cried through the whole thing," Thrasher said of her reaction to the discussion. "I was so happy I wasn't visible on the Zoom and that nobody could hear me. It was gut-wrenching and inspiring, and all of those people were so thoughtful. It really gives me chills, just thinking about it now. But really, I loved all the panels," she added. "I was super excited that the Foundation was able to do the event [despite the pandemic]."

Delaney describes the conference discussions as both "informative and inspiring, which is a testament to the television community and their ability to pull together and continue our service to our students and their teachers."

The event also united sponsors from the industry and beyond. Support from presenting sponsor KIA Motors America ensured that scholarships could be offered to attendees; KIA also hosted the panel on TV and homelessness. Apple TV+ hosted "Script to Screen: Story and Casting in Little America," and BritBox was the host of "Creativity in a Time of Crisis."

"In this trying time, the fact that our sponsors stepped up to help cover ticket costs meant a lot to our attendees and to all of us at the Foundation," Delaney said.

—Liane Starr

For more information, go to TelevisionAcademy.com/Faculty-Seminar and TelevisionAcademy.com/PoTV/Homelessness.

Stepping Down, Staying Committed

AFTER FOUR YEARS AS chair of the Television Academy Foundation, Madeline Di Nonno — who is also CEO of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media — is by no means ready to relax. As she steps down from the volunteer position, having reached the prescribed two-term limit, she is reflecting on the challenges faced and accomplishments achieved since she first stepped forward.

"I had been a member of the board for a while," she says, "and that gave me an inside perspective on where I felt the Foundation needed to go. I was focused on how to make the Foundation stronger and even more relevant in terms of the changes occurring in the industry."

Some issues were easy to spot — the need to drive revenue to the Foundation and increase



Madeline Di Nonno, outgoing Foundation chair

board membership and engagement. "We wanted to transition the board to a giving board, and also reframe programs like the Faculty Seminar, which could be a revenue-generating entity," Di Nonno says. In addition to bringing on new members, increasing diversity on the board — among people of color and the LGBTQ and disability communities — was an important change. But she also sought professional diversity.

"We have thirty peer groups within the Television Academy," she notes, "so the board should be reflective of those groups." That meant adding TV pros from categories that hadn't previously been represented, such as performers, musicians and those working in reality television and for streaming services. "I believe these changes have set the Foundation up for great success moving forward," she states.

"Madeline has been a tremendous chair, and has led the Foundation with incredible energy, expertise and heart," said

Foundation executive director Jodi Delaney. "Her passion for this work is palpable, and she has advanced our mission in so many ways."

Among those advancements: bringing increased attention to program alumni. For example, Di Nonno oversaw the hiring of Foundation interns as trophy presenters at the Emmys telecast, which gave the much-admired program worldwide visibility.

Of course, no one was presenting Emmys in person this year, but Di Nonno didn't let the pandemic diminish her goals for either the internship program or the Faculty Seminar. Both continued in a virtual format, and the internship program, she points out, "enjoyed historic success." In terms of diversity, 74 percent of this year's summer interns were students of color, and in a time of employment challenges, several students secured jobs with their mentors and host companies.

While Di Nonno has some regrets about a few changes she wasn't able to complete — such as expanding the internship program beyond L.A. to production centers like New York and Atlanta — she hopes her successor will be able to implement them.

The good news is, she's not going anywhere. "I will remain a board member," Di Nonno said, "and will continue to play a role in fulfilling the Foundation's important mission. I aspire to continue to serve." —L.S.

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Academy News



Sohonet's Chuck Parker



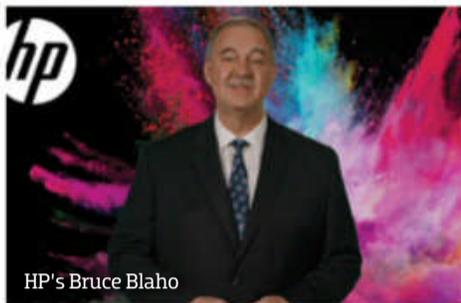
Evercast's Alex Cyrell, Roger Barton and Brad Thomas



Host Kirsten Vangsness



Peter Litwinowicz, Pierre Jasmin and Christophe Souchard of RE: Vision Effects



HP's Bruce Blaho



Dan Dugan of Dugan Sound Design



Dan Raviv, Nir Averbuch, Yair Chuchem, Tal Aviram and Zvika Roitman of Sound Radix



Foundry's Peter Crossley



Apple's Greg Wallace



Ian Main and Dave Hobbs of Teradici



James Eggleton of CODEX



Tim Sweeney of Epic Games

72nd Engineering Awards

A virtual ceremony — with a nod to Covid-conducive tech — closes out an Emmy year like no other.

AT THE CLOSE of the 72nd Engineering Emmy Awards — which went online-only this year, due to the pandemic — host Kirsten Vangsness had a reminder for viewers: "Although the presentation may have been virtual," she said, "the eleven extraordinary achievements we honored this year are the real deal."

Indeed. What could be more real than the innovative technology to which television owes its very existence?

The event, which streamed October 29 and remains available at Emmys.com, marked the end of Emmy season and also the fifth consecutive hosting stint for Vangsness, who last February wrapped her fifteenth and final season as technical analyst

Penelope Garcia on the CBS procedural *Criminal Minds*.

As usual, the Engineering Emmys recognized contributions to the production, recording, transmission and reception of television in all its forms. But the ceremony itself differed in ways other than distribution. Two perennial honors — the Charles F. Jenkins Lifetime Achievement Award for individuals and the Philo T. Farnsworth Corporate Achievement Award — were postponed until the next in-person ceremony.

And, of this year's eleven recipients, the event spotlighted four already-existing technologies that were pressed into service to accommodate the needs of content creators to work remotely in the time of Covid-19. Chosen for their convenience, effectiveness and reliability, the recipients enable secure, real-time collaboration from anywhere in the world:

- **ClearView Flex** by Sohonet has varied uses in preproduction, production, VFX and other postproduction, streaming video

and audio on most popular consumer devices to easily accommodate those working from home.

- **ZCentral Remote Boost** from HP Inc. allows users access to high-performance computing for such elements as editing, VFX and 3D.

- **Teradici Cloud Access Software** from Teradici can also be used on a myriad of devices and is particularly effective for graphics-heavy workloads.

- **Evercast Platform** from Evercast can stream any creative workflow, such as on-set camera images and editing footage.

"It's been a crazy year, and our industry has faced challenges that no one could have foreseen," said Sohonet CEO Chuck Parker in his acceptance. "It's been a great pleasure for me, and for our whole team, to have supported our industry colleagues throughout this difficult period, doing our part to enable remote workflows with a large majority of creatives working from home. Our mission is to connect storytellers, enabling them to continue doing what they do

best: making the magic we see on our screens. It's been inspiring to see that happen this year, despite the circumstances."

Evercast cofounder and CCO Roger Barton's acceptance pointed to the human side of technology creation. After thanking his son for inspiring him, he said, "As a film editor and single dad, who struggled to find balance in my own life for close to thirty years, I'm grateful to be part of Evercast, whose mission is to facilitate the creative process by empowering artists to collaborate on their own terms. My hope is that the more efficient we become as filmmakers, the more balance we will have in our own lives, which will enable us to create better, more meaningful art."

The Engineering Awards committee is chaired by John Leverence, who retired last year after thirty-nine years of service to the Academy, most recently as senior vice-president of awards. For more on all eleven awards and to watch a replay of the event, go to Emmys.com/Engineering.
—Libby Slate



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Nena Erb, ACE

Primetime Emmy Tally: Two

How She Got the Gold: For outstanding single-camera picture editing for a comedy series in 2020, for HBO's *Insecure*, and for outstanding picture editing for an unstructured reality program, in 2016, for HBO's *Project Greenlight*.

Now for the Noms: Erb won each time she was nominated.

Mixed Emotions: "Winning this year has been bittersweet. This win — especially in the comedy category — means the world to me. I'm editing on *Insecure*, a show I love, with an incredible team of creatives. But it happened in a year of unprecedented crisis."

Heels on Hold: "HBO and the Television Academy throw phenomenal parties, so I missed that this year. I also missed celebrating everyone's achievements together. The part I didn't miss was buying a new dress and being in heels all day."

Perfect Find: "It took me a minute to find my way into the cutting room. I had worked in various capacities in production but didn't discover editing until I started as an associate producer. The editor I was working with showed me how you can shape a character and change tone or pacing to help tell a story. I knew I had found what I wanted to do."

Home Again: "*Insecure* is set in South L.A. When my family and I immigrated to the U.S., we lived with my aunt and uncle in Ladera Heights and I went to school in Inglewood [both in South L.A.]. The community rallied around us as we built a new life. I'm fortunate to work on a series that highlights how special this neighborhood is."

All Together: "As a woman of color, it is both invigorating and uplifting to work with other women of color on a deeply textured human comedy. The sense of collaboration I've gotten to experience on *Insecure* is something we should all be striving for in every project."



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