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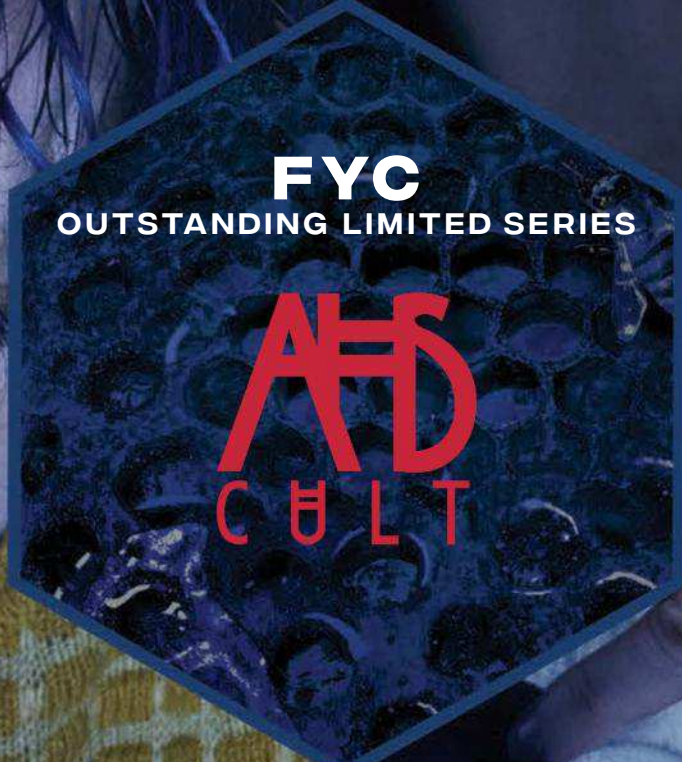
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Jeff Daniels was photographed on Aug. 7 at Minetta Tavern, which stands in for Elaine's in Hulu's *The Looming Tower*.

Photographed by **Mackenzie Stroh**

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Peak TV's Race for Maximum Buzz

With hundreds of shows vying for votes, networks and streamers are turning to bigger and bigger stunts in hopes of catching voters' attention **BY SCOTT FEINBERG**



Above, the premiere for the second season of *The Handmaid's Tale* and, left, an art kit promoting Nat Geo's *Genius: Picasso*.

The first screener of the season, for Audience Network's *Mr. Mercedes*, was mailed way back on Feb. 6, and the first "FYC" event, for Showtime's *The Chi*, was held for TV Academy members March 9.

That may sound like a strangely early start to Emmy campaigning, considering that nomination voting doesn't begin until June 11, final voting doesn't begin until Aug. 13 and the 70th Emmys won't happen until Sept. 17. But in the era of Peak TV — with more than 500 scripted series, plus an untold number of talk and reality shows, spread across hundreds of broadcast networks, cable and

streaming services — it has never been harder to capture the attention of voters, of whom there are also more now than ever before (some 22,000). And since most will vote only for something they've actually seen (what a concept!), there is now an all-out war to try to register on their radar.

How did we get here? Until the 1990s, virtually all Emmy noms were split among the Big Three networks — ABC, CBS and NBC — with an occasional nom for Fox or PBS. Then came HBO, which needed subscribers, not commercials, to survive, and was therefore willing to spend real money in pursuit of Emmys — which, in turn, would attract more subscribers.

HBO introduced screeners in 1990, and once others began providing them (with the TV Academy taking its middleman cut), it became a competition to see who could offer the most lavish mailing. Then the TV Academy began renting space to content providers for FYC events, and it became a competition to see who could offer the most lavish post-panel reception. Efforts to be visible in the media expanded beyond local papers and ultimately to the internet, and now everyone fights to secure ads and coverage everywhere, and efforts to reach motorists expanded beyond the Sunset Strip to billboards, buses and bus stops along thoroughfares spanning from Silver Lake to Westwood.

Five years ago, roughly coinciding with the rise of another disrupter that lives or dies by subscriptions — Netflix — things got really cutthroat. Content providers began hiring the same consultants who captain Oscar campaigns. Yard signs and food trucks started popping up. And then, in 2017, "spaces" hosting screenings, panels and mixers (Amazon set up at the Hollywood Athletic Club and Netflix inside a 24,000-square-foot office building) were established to circumvent the TV Academy's restrictive FYC schedule.

This season, no stone is being left unturned. Actors are running the promotional marathon, billboards are everywhere, and the spaces are back — Amazon returned to the HAC, this time welcoming the public and offering "experiences" like *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*-inspired hairstyling, while Netflix relocated to three soundstages at Raleigh Studios, hosting A-list talent for events including a conversation between David Letterman (*My Next Guest Needs No Introduction*) and Jerry Seinfeld (*Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee*). For similar gatherings, other content providers are increasingly employing studio lots (ABC's



On March 19, Amazon put up a billboard in Hollywood promoting *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*.

Black-ish did a table read and party at Disney) or shorter-term rentals (NBC's *This Is Us* hosted at Ace Hotel).

Some are seeking a comparable bang from season premieres (the second season of Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale* debuted at the TCL Chinese Theatre), live performances (John Legend played the piano for NBC's *Jesus Christ Superstar*) and an array of stunts: special appearances (the stars of FX's *Baskets* are set to man an Arby's counter); in-character ads on public benches (HBO's *Barry*) and business cards (Amazon's *Maisel*); and cheeky mailings (Fox's *Family Guy* bragged on the outside of a card, "We Predicted Kevin Spacey and Harvey Weinstein, Open DVD to See Who's Next"; inside was a mirror).

Do any of these shenanigans actually impact the way voters vote? There's no question the efforts result in more voters being aware of and likely to check out certain shows — and again, that's half the battle, so they probably boost nomination tallies. But they also cost a fortune and, at the end of the day, TV Academy members vote in private and for what they like most, not for the content provider that showed them the best time. Last year, the two providers that hosted event spaces, Netflix and Amazon, garnered 91 and 16 noms, respectively, whereas one that did not pull out the FYC stops, Hulu, snagged 18 — and Hulu ultimately was the only streamer to win a series award. And HBO, now the old kid on the block, landed more noms (111) and wins (29) than any of them. **VH1**

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TALES OF TWO LIVES

Dern stars in *The Tale*, which debuted May 28 on HBO following its Sundance premiere.

'People Are Ready to See the Truth'

Director Jennifer Fox unravels the abuse she suffered as a teenager with HBO's *The Tale*, starring Laura Dern

By Mia Galuppo

Four months after dozens of women came forward to share their stories of sexual harassment and assault at the hands of Harvey Weinstein — the beginning of a Hollywood-wide reckoning — Jennifer Fox found herself onstage at the Eccles Theater during the Sundance Film Festival, about to tell her own sexual-abuse story with her 114-minute movie.

The Tale is a cinematic memoir based on Fox's life, following a journalist who discovers a story she wrote for a childhood English class about what she believed was a consensual, "special" relationship between her 13-year-old self and her adult track coach. The movie

volleys back and forth between the teen Jenny (Isabelle Nelisse) and the adult Jennifer (Laura Dern), who must contend with the much more disturbing reality of the relationship.

"People are ready to see the truth about just how grotesque this is," says Fox, who has spent her filmmaking career focusing on telling other people's stories as a documentarian, with credits like *Beirut: The Last Home Movie* and *My Reincarnation*. *The Tale*, her narrative debut, is the product of several years of failed attempts and stops-and-starts to tell a story that she was still trying to piece together for herself.

Once satisfied with a screenplay, Fox was faced with the predicament of having to cast herself, enlisting the help of friend and fellow filmmaker Brian De Palma. "[He] looked at

my list and said, 'Laura Dern, she's the only one with the guts to do this.'"

Says Dern of the role: "It's like the most meta. That person whose eyes I'm looking in, who is my director, is the person I'm playing."

Even with a star like Dern attached, there were massive roadblocks to getting the story told. Fox was insistent on the inclusion of a scene in which the coach has sex with a young Jenny. "It was a deal-breaker to take it out," she remembers. "We got turned down by a million cinematographers who wouldn't touch this film." Shooting intimate scenes that involve a minor also proved to be a hurdle in getting financiers. "No one even wanted to think about it," says Dern. "It was an endless, 'Oh wow are you going to do that?' 'That's

not possible.' 'This is too much.'"

To get the movie financed, the director drew on her years of experience scraping together documentary funding. "I swear, I think I tapped on everybody's shoulder that I could until there was nobody left to tap on," says Fox. She strung together a dizzying web of French-German financiers, philanthropic funds like the female-focused Gamechanger and private financiers, including Gigi Pritzker, artist Regina Scully, entrepreneur Lynda Weinman and producer Abigail Disney. "Everybody who



→ *Tale* also stars Jason Ritter and Elizabeth Debicki.

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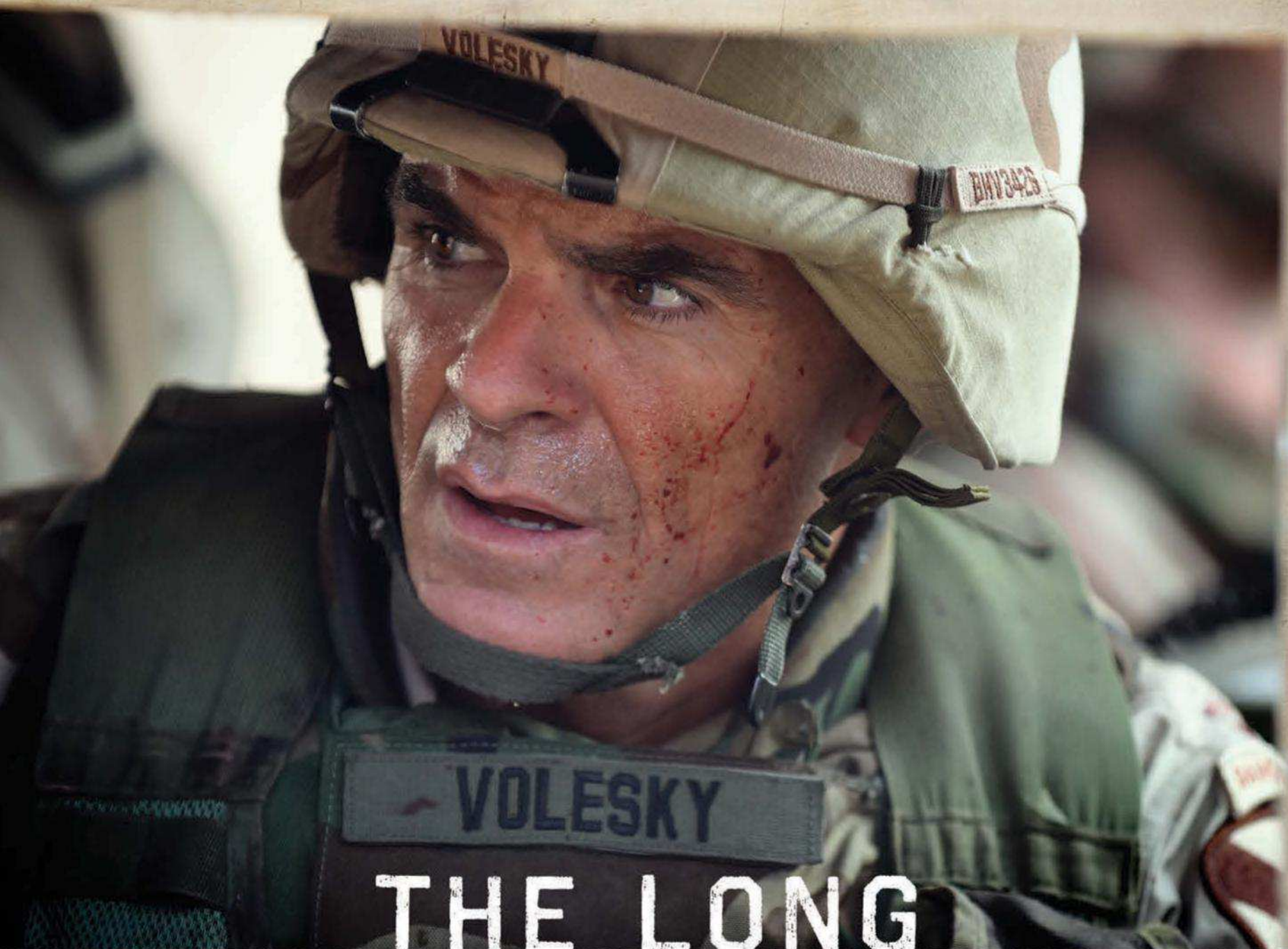
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signed on had enormous courage because [it was] before this moment in history [the #MeToo movement], and it was really scary," says Fox.

Dern and Fox say that co-star Jason Ritter, who portrays the coach, Bill, took a risk by playing such a possibly damaging role. "One would presume Jennifer would be like, 'Let's cast a son-of-a-bitch,'" notes Dern, with Fox interjecting, "But these men are not external monsters, they're everyday people." Ritter has the kind eyes, earnest smile and boyish nature that audiences aren't accustomed to seeing in serial abusers. "You can understand how a little girl could fall in love with him, and you can understand how even a family might miss the cues or a community might miss the cues."

Fox was turned down by multiple actors before Dern suggested they reach out to Ritter. After sending him the script, they met with him in person together, fully knowing that approaching an actor to play a man who grooms a teenage girl in order to sexually abuse her is a heavy ask. "Many, many men didn't have the guts," says Fox. When it came time to shoot, Ritter was paired with an adult body double.

After a year in the editing room, Fox brought her story to Sundance, where it quickly became one of the buzziest titles of the festival. "It's only because the #MeToo and Time's Up movements had started six months before that people were able to digest those

scenes," says Fox. In a rare move, HBO picked up the movie for about \$7 million at the festival. (The network rarely acquires finished films.)

Since January, Fox, Dern and HBO have held several screenings of *The Tale* for women inside and outside the industry.

"We retell stories about how fortunate we are compared to horrors that others have gone through — but we don't give ourselves room to really go through what, for us, was deeply traumatic," says Dern.

It was at a screening of *The Tale* for women in sports that Fox met an athlete who worked with Larry Nassar, the disgraced USA Gymnastics national team doctor who was found guilty on multiple counts of sexual assault of minors, his athletes. "She's one of the ones who has testified," recalls Fox. "[She] came up to me, tears in her eyes, saying, 'Honestly, I have been suicidal. But if you can survive, I can too. If you can become an adult, if you can have a good life, so can I.'"

Beyond being a personal story and a timely narrative about sexual abuse, Fox insists *The Tale* is a larger examination of how women use memory as a means to protect themselves from trauma. "It's important that you survive trauma, but then hopefully at a certain point, when you're ready, you are allowed to bring in other truths and other narratives," she concludes.

"The women I've met, they function. I am not the exception. I am the rule." **THR**

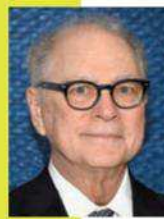


Pacino in *Paterno*, which couldn't shoot on the Penn State campus after the school refused to participate.

'It's the Highest and Lowest Points in His Life'

In HBO's *Paterno*, Barry Levinson explores the final few weeks of former Penn State coach Joe Paterno's life, during the Jerry Sandusky sex-abuse scandal **By Patrick Shanley**

After earning an Emmy nomination for last year's Bernie Madoff biopic *The Wizard of Lies*, director Barry Levinson returns to HBO with another film based on true events, *Paterno*. Starring Al Pacino as the famed Penn State football coach Joe Paterno, the TV movie centers on the last few weeks of his life, when a sexual-abuse scandal around assistant coach Jerry Sandusky rocked the university and the football program. Levinson opened up to *THR* about bringing the sensitive story to the screen, working with Pacino and that Anthony Scaramucci executive producer credit.



Levinson

Paterno obviously had a very big presence in education and college football outside of the Sandusky trial. Was the plan for this film always to focus on just the end of his life and the scandal?

Yes, because otherwise you're going to get into some sprawling piece and have to deal with at least 35 years.

It didn't seem doable that way. There's a great drama to the fact that in two weeks in a man's life you can get a good idea about what the institution didn't do and the cover-up that went with it, and we fold that together as a man is basically stuck in an MRI machine. So, you're dealing with the highest high of winning 409 games and then the lowest low of being fired. It's the highest and lowest points in his life.

How did Pacino get involved in the project?

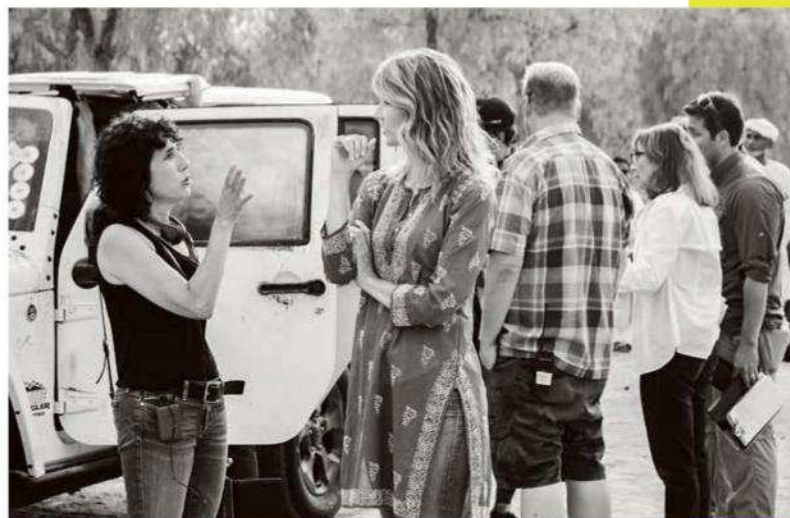
Al was involved with it earlier on and it didn't work out — there wasn't a script that they were all happy with — so it fell apart. Then Al was talking to me about it and I said, "Let me think about this." I looked at the material and laid out basically the concept of what we have. He liked the idea.

Did you get any response from Penn State or the Paternos?

No, we never heard anything from the university. The only thing from the Paterno family we saw was a tweet from Scott [Paterno, Joe's son] saying it was all fiction.

What was Anthony Scaramucci's involvement as co-executive producer?

He had no involvement. You know what's so terrible nowadays? If anyone invests any money or does anything, they automatically become a producer. I didn't even know he was involved on any level until the closing credits. **THR**



"I felt so free to be an actor telling a story that is in the hands of the person who knows it," says Dern, on set with Fox (left).



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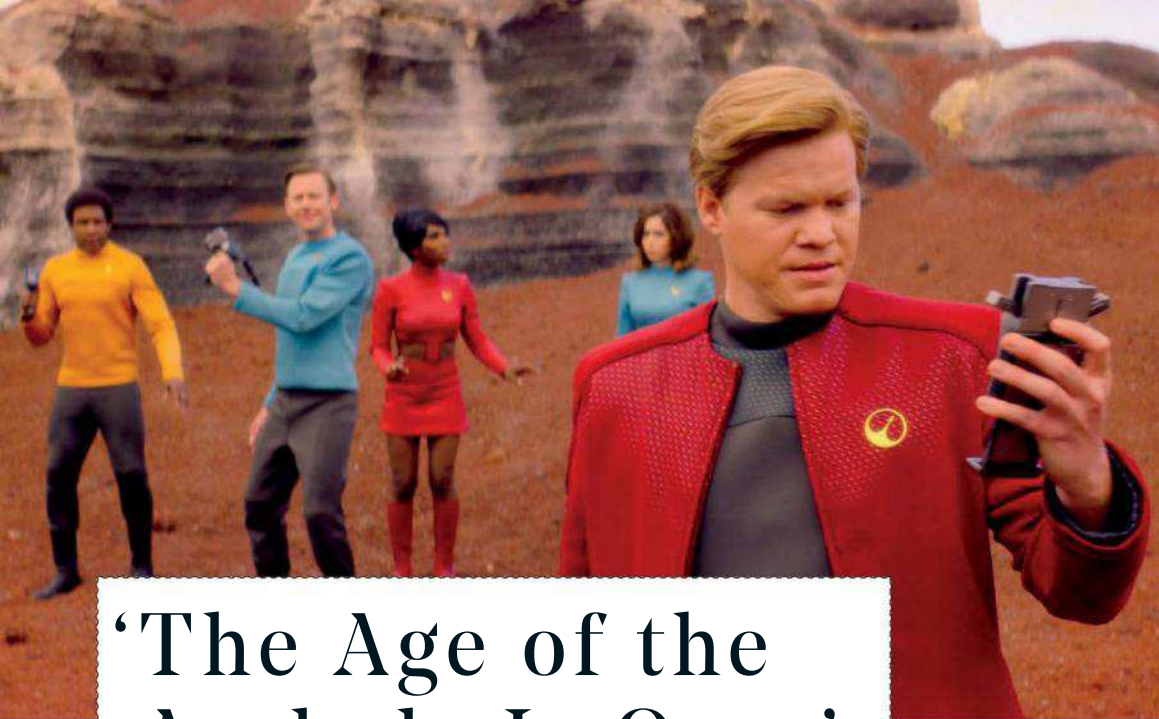
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‘The Age of the Asshole Is Over’

Two futuristic sci-fi stories — Netflix’s *Black Mirror* and Amazon’s *Electric Dreams* — land at just the right time **By Lauren Huff**

Plemons plays an online game in which he holds his co-workers’ avatars captive.

Black Mirror’s #MeToo Moment

The script for the “USS Callister” episode of Netflix’s creepy sci-fi series *Black Mirror* was conceived long before the Harvey Weinstein bombshells and the subsequent #MeToo and Time’s Up movements, but the episode felt especially timely when it aired with the rest of the six-episode fourth season in December.



Haynes

Following tech genius Robert Daly (Jesse Plemons), who creates his own *Star Trek*-esque universe within an online game where he controls and abuses digital clones of his co-workers, the episode hit Netflix two months into the workplace harassment reckoning. “It kind of contextualized [the episode] in a way that was completely unexpected,” says director Toby Haynes. “It just brought new meaning to it. You’re watching it going, ‘Crikey, this is really touching on something here.’”

Still, Haynes largely credits star Cristin Milioti — who plays Nanette, a co-worker who eventually refuses to comply with Daly’s in-game demands and leads the others to revolt against him — with bringing the harassment angle to the forefront of the episode. “She was already bringing the whole toxic masculinity — the kind of harassment in the workplace — aspect to the story,” he says. “Like any woman in this industry, she really recognized it in her life and she pushed it to the front.”

For the part of Daly, Plemons, known for his chameleon-like performances on *Fargo* and in films like *Black Mass*, shaved a bald spot into the back of his head. Plus, the actor had to disclose his weight ahead of the shoot. “We had

to ask him how heavy he was,” says Haynes. “You just don’t know with Jesse because he’s a shape-shifter for roles.”

Although at first Daly seems like a sympathetic outcast, it becomes clear within the game that his Captain Kirk-like character is playing “bad God” — and that, unfortunately for him, he completely underestimates Nanette. “Right as he meets her, [he] thinks she’s kind of a pretty little thing and doesn’t really see her as a worthy adversary. And then she gets to overcome him in such a brilliant way,” says Haynes. “She triumphs ultimately.”

That victory creates a more optimistic ending to the episode compared to other chapters of the Charlie Brooker-created series.

Says Haynes, “This one really did feel like a message of ‘We will overcome.’ The age of the asshole is over, and it should be.”

Electric Dreams’ Terrifying Tyrant

With the “Kill All Others” episode of Amazon’s sci-fi anthology, *Electric Dreams*, director Dee Rees, who helmed 2017’s *Mudbound*, took an alien-invasion story and morphed it into a haunting political allegory.



Hackett

As with the rest of the series, the episode is based on a short story by Philip K. Dick — in this case, “The Hanging Stranger.” It tells the future-set tale of an everyman, Philbert (played by Mel Rodriguez), who hears the nation’s only presidential candidate (an eerie Vera Farmiga) instruct viewers to “kill all others” during a

campaign appearance, prompting violence. Philbert fears for his sanity when it seems his fellow citizens are apathetic about the candidate’s statement and the violence it provokes. “There are some people that are going to point to it and say, ‘This is about the political era that we’ve entered,’” says executive producer and showrunner Michael Dinner. “It feels like a very timely story, but certainly when we got the first draft it was long before the results [of the election] had come in.”

Indeed, Rees adapted the story way before the 2016 presidential election. But executive producer Isa Dick Hackett (daughter of Philip K. Dick) agrees on its timeliness: “I think this mention of ‘the others’ is more relevant now than perhaps when she began writing it.”

Each of the 10 stand-alone *Electric Dreams* episodes had the challenge of creating a universe. Rees’ installment was the third to shoot in Chicago. “She started from scratch with a crew that was a little tired at that point, and she had to come in with a whip and get them going,” says Dinner, who credits Rees with establishing an effectively relatable future world. “What I think is interesting is when you take a piece that’s set in the future and yet it’s



Louis Herthum (left) and Rodriguez, whose character dares to question a political leader’s deadly edict.

still reminiscent, we still recognize the world that we came from.”

For Dinner and Hackett, the theme of the episode is clear and especially timely for today’s political climate.

“There’s a powerful message about groupthink and how dangerous that can be,” says Dinner. “To somehow see to the heart of the matter and see the truth and not be swayed by the mob, I think that’s a really powerful message.” Adds Hackett: “That is essentially it. Beware of that sort of groupthink. People should stay awake — and complacency, apathy and indifference are truly the enemy.” **TJR**



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'The Fact That Something Actually Happened Is No Defense'

Creating a series based on true events comes with a unique set of hurdles, whether it's 'cheating a little bit' to grab viewers, creating tension when the ending is known or casting actors who look and feel like their real-life characters **By Carita Rizzo**

In recent years, true crime and real-life events have seen a resurgence on scripted television. And while it's often said that truth is stranger than fiction, turning fact into compelling drama comes with its own challenges.

"Reality is messy," says Rene Balcer, veteran producer of *Law & Order*, who this year spun the franchise that often rips cases straight from the headlines off into the NBC limited series *True Crime: The Menendez Murders*. "While a true-life story can offer the writer an abundance of ready-made riches,

if you get into narrative trouble you can't just have Vin Diesel drive his car through your front window and save the day. And while it's true that reality often strains credulity, the fact that something actually happened is no defense if it strikes a false note in your narrative."

In the case of the Menendez brothers' murder trial, source material was, indeed, abundant. "The logistics of the storytelling were daunting," says Balcer. "The Menendez case stretched over eight years, involved two trials — one trial had two revolving

juries — two defendants, two sets of defense lawyers, two sets of prosecutors and witnesses galore, all of which had to be compressed into eight 41-minute episodes."

Not only did Balcer have to truncate the events into palatable form, he also had to tell a controversial story while keeping a risk-averse legal department happy. "If we were going to offend certain members of the family, we would only do so if the facts backed it up," he says. "Most of the family members believed that the brothers were molested, at least by [their father,] Jose Menendez.

We presented both points of view, but with a bias toward what the testimonial evidence indicated; that the brothers were in fact molested by their parents."

As if creating a dramatically engaging narrative about one of the most sensitive events in U.S. history wasn't hard enough, in turning former FBI Agent Ali Soufan's and Lawrence Wright's accounts of the events leading up to 9/11 into a series, *The Looming Tower* creator Dan Futterman and his writers also had to have all scripts for the Hulu series vetted by a lawyer.



1 Alex Rich (far left) plays the young Picasso in *Genius*. 2 Taylor Kitsch in *Waco*. 3 *Law & Order True Crime: The Menendez Murders*. 4 Chris Noth as Don Ackerman in *Manhunt: Unabomber*. 5 Wrenn Schmidt as CIA agent Diane Marsh in *The Looming Tower*. 6 In *Versace*, Edgar Ramirez and Penelope Cruz play siblings Gianni and Donatella Versace. 7 Rose as Shakur in *Unsolved*.

Manhunt: Unabomber takes more dramatic creative license regarding one key event in particular.

Centering on FBI agent Jim Fitzgerald's (played by Sam Worthington) investigation of the Unabomber case, which led the agency to Ted Kaczynski (Paul Bettany) based on his manifesto, the series features many key scenes of the two men going head to head — events that in reality never took place.

"I said to everyone, 'There's no version of the show without the cop and the killer meeting,'" says executive producer John Goldwyn. Real-life Fitzgerald, who acted as a consultant on the series, initially took great exception to the scenes. "It was a very legitimate position for him to take," says Goldwyn.

But the exec producer, whose casting of actors Worthington and Bettany was a major coup for Discovery Channel's relatively new foray into scripted fare, was adamant that this was a situation where taking liberties within the narrative was not just warranted but non-negotiable.

"I said to [Fitzgerald], 'Jim, I understand. I really do. But when you have the opportunity to have actors of this caliber in your show, there is going to be an unspoken expectation from the viewer to see them face off,'" Goldwyn recalls. "He accepted it,

and I think, in the end, embraced it."

In his true crime anthology series *Unsolved: The Murders of Tupac & The Notorious B.I.G.* for USA, showrunner Kyle Long took similar liberties, creating a fictional meeting between the two detectives who put everything on the line for the investigation into the murders of the rap icons.

"Greg Kading and Russell Poole never met," admits Long. "The meeting happened in real life between [police officer] Daryn Dupree and Russell Poole. It didn't happen with Kading there, so I cheated a little bit."

Long wrestled with the decision, but ultimately found it was important for the show. "I knew it didn't fundamentally change the truth," he says. "These guys really did put everything into this case and they kind of got screwed over by the departments in the same way. I just felt like it was necessary and tied everything together."

While Long dealt with sensitive material that implies both police corruption and criminal activity on the part of well-known entities that still roam free, the legal implications were not the reason he thought the show would never get made. "When I wrote this, part of the reason I thought it's just too hard [to realize] was the casting," says Long. "When it came to Tupac I thought, 'How are we going to find this guy?'"

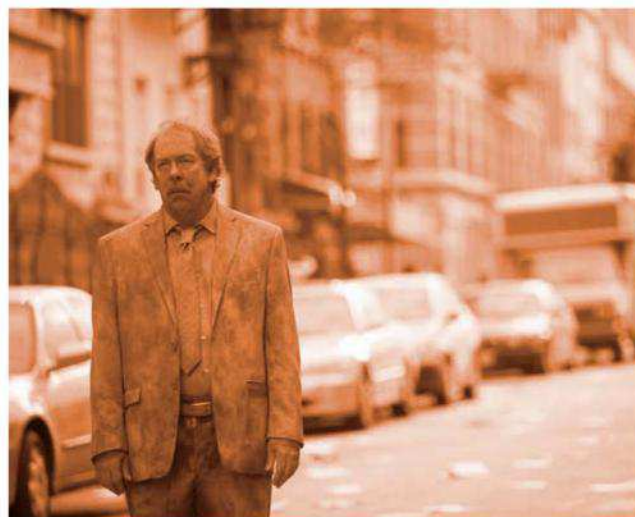
Long deferred to director Anthony Hemingway (*Red Tails*) when it came to the hiring of Marcc Rose as Tupac Shakur (the actor's only previous credit was a turn as Shakur in 2015's *Straight Outta Compton*) and the entirely unknown Wavvy Jones as Christopher Wallace, aka Biggie Smalls. "One of the things Anthony and I are most blown away by is Marcc, because he was very inexperienced, and I knew this was really on his shoulders," says Long. "It's so gratifying to hear, 'Oh my God, the guy who

"We had a researcher who was footnoting every script, and often the lawyer would task her with coming up with some more footnotes: 'Where did this come from? What are you relying on? What's the conjecture here?'" says Futterman. "We were working under that kind of scrutiny."

The issue they often faced was that their research appeared to contradict itself. "You have to decide what you believe is the most likely thing that actually happened," says Futterman of conveying the persistent conflicts between government agencies that rendered their counterterrorism investigations fatally ineffective. "There were certainly some moments where we were trying to figure out, 'How do we express this moment in which information was denied? Was it sloppiness?

Was it deliberate?' We got to a place where we felt comfortable expressing it the way it came out in the show."

While both *The Menendez Brothers* and *The Looming Tower* take calculated liberties in regard to chronology and composite characters, Discovery Channel's



Bill Camp in a scene set on 9/11 in *The Looming Tower*.

GENIUS: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/DOUGLAS MATTING; WACO: PARAMOUNT NETWORK/MILLER WOBBLEY; MENENDEZ: JUSTIN LUBIN/NBC; MANHUNT: TINA RUDEN/ DISCOVERY COMMUNICATIONS; LOOMING: JODI WILDE/NETFLIX; VERSACE: RAY MICHAEL/FOX; TUPAC: RICHELLE KEMP/USA NETWORK; CAMP: CRAIG BLANKENHORN/HULU



plays Tupac is amazing,' because we had a real anxiety about getting it right."

Jonez was discovered through a cellphone clip he sent in. "He'd never been at an audition," says Long. "It could have gone so wrong. They really stepped up."

A retelling of any real-life event is guaranteed to invite critique. After they created *Waco*, Paramount Network's miniseries about the 51-day standoff between David Koresh's religious cult (known as the Branch Davidians) and the FBI and ATF

that resulted in a fatal fire, killing 76 Branch Davidians, brother filmmakers Drew and John Dowdle faced criticism for making the members of the cult too relatable. "That's a funny thing that Drew and I turned over in our heads," says Dowdle. "Like, we could have made them more monstrous somehow."

Appearing too sympathetic to the Branch Davidians is a reproach that they can accept. "The whole project came from a place of looking at the story differently," says Drew. "We were writing a 'bad guy'

character, and to flesh it out more we wanted to give him a backstory, like, maybe he grew up at Waco and that insanity is what made him this horrible, crazy person."

Drew adds that reading David Thibodeau's 1999 book *A Place Called Waco: A Survivor's Storybook* was "such an eye-opening experience for both of us. It was totally different from any narrative of Waco we had ever seen before."

It is a story they feel could not have been told accurately without consultants from both sides of the conflict. While Thibodeau was

1 Michael Stuhlbarg in *The Looming Tower*
2 Julia Garner and Rory Culkin in *Waco*. 3 *The Menendez Murders*. 4 Banderas in *Picasso*.

on set to inform the actors about life inside the compound, FBI hostage negotiator Gary Noesner filled them in on the events outside it. "I remember, one day, looking over and seeing Thibodeau and Noesner, the real guys, breaking it all down and making sense of it together," says John.

Adds Drew, "There were times in the script stage where Gary Noesner would say, 'Hey, this scene isn't completely fair.' We really

Q&A

Godless Work

How writer-director Scott Frank lassoed his seven-part Western

BY REBECCA FORD



← The women of the town of La Belle attempt to defend their homes in *Godless*.

Scott Frank spent years trying to make *Godless* — a Western that follows a town full of women (widowed when a mine collapsed) who find their homes threatened after the arrival of an injured outlaw — as a movie. It finally came to fruition as a seven-part Netflix series, starring Jack O'Connell, Michelle Dockery and Jeff Daniels.

Frank, 58, spoke to *THR* about his star-studded cast and their horse-riding abilities.

How did this project end up as a limited series?

I wrote it in 2004 as a film and tried to get it made forever. Westerns just were not in fashion and they didn't do well overseas in particular, which was a key part of the decision.

Steven Soderbergh had just done *Behind the Candelabra* on HBO and said, "It's like a whole other world right now. Maybe [TV] is a good place for you."

You have a lot of British actors in your cast. Was that a coincidence?

I just cast people based on if they would just feel right to me. Even

Michelle Dockery, who I was resistant to at first only because I only knew her from *Downton Abbey* — when I saw her audition, she was so clearly exactly what I had in my head. I completely forgot about anything she had done before and can't even see her doing *Lady Mary* anymore.

What sort of preparation did the actors need?

Every actor that was on a horse had to go through a little bit of cowboy camp. Jack O'Connell spent a good two months before we started shooting working with the horses and

Jeff Daniels also worked a lot. He was always riding a horse. He would come to set on a horse. He would have one by his trailer all the time. Sometimes I'd see him riding barefoot.



Frank

Did you get on a horse?

I rode the horse a lot. Sometimes the camera would

be really far away from the action and it would be faster to just jump on a horse and ride out to where everybody was. I was just always praying, "Don't fall off in front of the actors, don't fall off in front of the actors." **THR**



wanted to honor that. Not just so they would stand behind the show, but so that we could feel that we got it right.”

While the challenge often is truncating an abundance of material, sometimes the dilemma is the opposite. In producing the follow-up to the hit limited series *American Crime Story: The People v. O.J. Simpson*, producer Nina Jacobson found that FX's *The Assassination of Gianni Versace* proved a more difficult story to tell than its predecessor.

“Whereas with the O.J. Simpson trial virtually every person involved with the story had written a book, in the case of Versace, we had much less information available to us,” she says.

The series creators based many of the key events in the story of Andrew Cunanan, who murdered the famous fashion designer outside his Miami home, on Maureen Orth's 2000 book *Vulgar Favors*. They gathered additional information from newspaper accounts and available video footage. “But what happened between David Madsen and Andrew Cunanan, for example, when they went missing for several days, or how exactly some of the murder scenes went down — the only people who know about them are dead,” says exec producer Brad Simpson. “They had to be imagined based on what we knew of the personalities and the crime scenes.”

That's where the storytellers must rely heavily on what they call “emotional truth.” “Marcia Clark used that phrase after she

Q&A

Complex Mosaic

Writer Ed Solomon reflects on HBO's innovative 'branching narrative' series
BY JACKIE STRAUSE

The HBO mini-series *Mosaic* began as a storytelling experiment. It was 2013 when Steven Soderbergh first brought the idea of a “branching narrative” platform to screenwriter Ed Solomon (whose film credits include *Now You See Me*, *Men in Black* and the *Bill & Ted* films, including the recently announced sequel, *Bill & Ted Face the Music*). Over the next three years, they developed a 500-page script and filmed eight hours of footage to tell a murder mystery in two forms: Through the *Mosaic* app, where users follow a customized branching narrative; and through HBO's six-episode “linear” version, released two months after the app. Solomon, 57, spoke to *THR* about creating the mystery centered on the disappearance of a famed author.

saw [*People v. O.J.*]. She said, ‘It’s not a documentary, but they captured the emotional truth of what happened,’” recalls Simpson, adding that producers did not, for either season, contact any of the people involved. “We want to be cognizant of the victims, but at the same time we think it’s best to tell the story based on historical evidence and to try to unpack what happened but not be beholden to telling one particular story in

What do you think of the feedback to *Mosaic*?

I was really overwhelmed with the response to both the branching version as well as the “traditional” *Mosaic* versions. I’m really proud of it because

we worked really, really hard on it and were trying to do something different, and the fact that it landed well made it that much better. I didn’t know how or if it would land.

How has working on this new form changed your writing process?

It’s made every character I write more rich, nuanced and detailed. When you’re writing in this form, you must think of every

character in your story as being worthy of carrying their own movie. Even if it doesn’t necessarily manifest in any kind of an overt way, it often comes through on a deeper level. And

I’m so glad to not be beholden to the studio movie system on any kind of a creative level. Being able

to forge new ground is so much more exciting. Even if it doesn’t succeed, it’s more exciting. It’s just a better way to live, being fascinated and challenged.

Has there been any discussion of a *Mosaic* sequel?

I don’t think we’re going to do a sequel. *Mosaic* was designed to be a one-off, ultimately. Its style of storytelling was really rooted in the style of story that it was. We learned so much about how to evolve the form further that it felt more appropriate to work a new story from the beginning, and try to totally take advantage of the form rather than try to change the tone and style of *Mosaic* to have a second season. **THR**



Solomon



Sharon Stone plays author Olivia Lake in the innovative series, which also stars Garrett Hedlund, Fred Weller and Beau Bridges.

one particular way. That’s been our approach for the *Crime Story* series in general.”

But how does one tell the most compelling story where the outcome is already known? “I think it’s really challenging,” says Ken Biller, creator of National Geographic’s *Genius* series, which this season features Pablo Picasso (played by Antonio Banderas). “So much of the tension of drama comes from the audience wondering about what

will the character do next.

We know that Picasso’s going to die at the end of the story. We know that he’s going to become wildly successful and famous. The trick then becomes the creative speculation about the inner turmoil of these characters.”

Biller, who based much of the dialogue on letters and events on research, turned to nonlinear storytelling to create suspense within the narrative. “It’s a technique where we could inject

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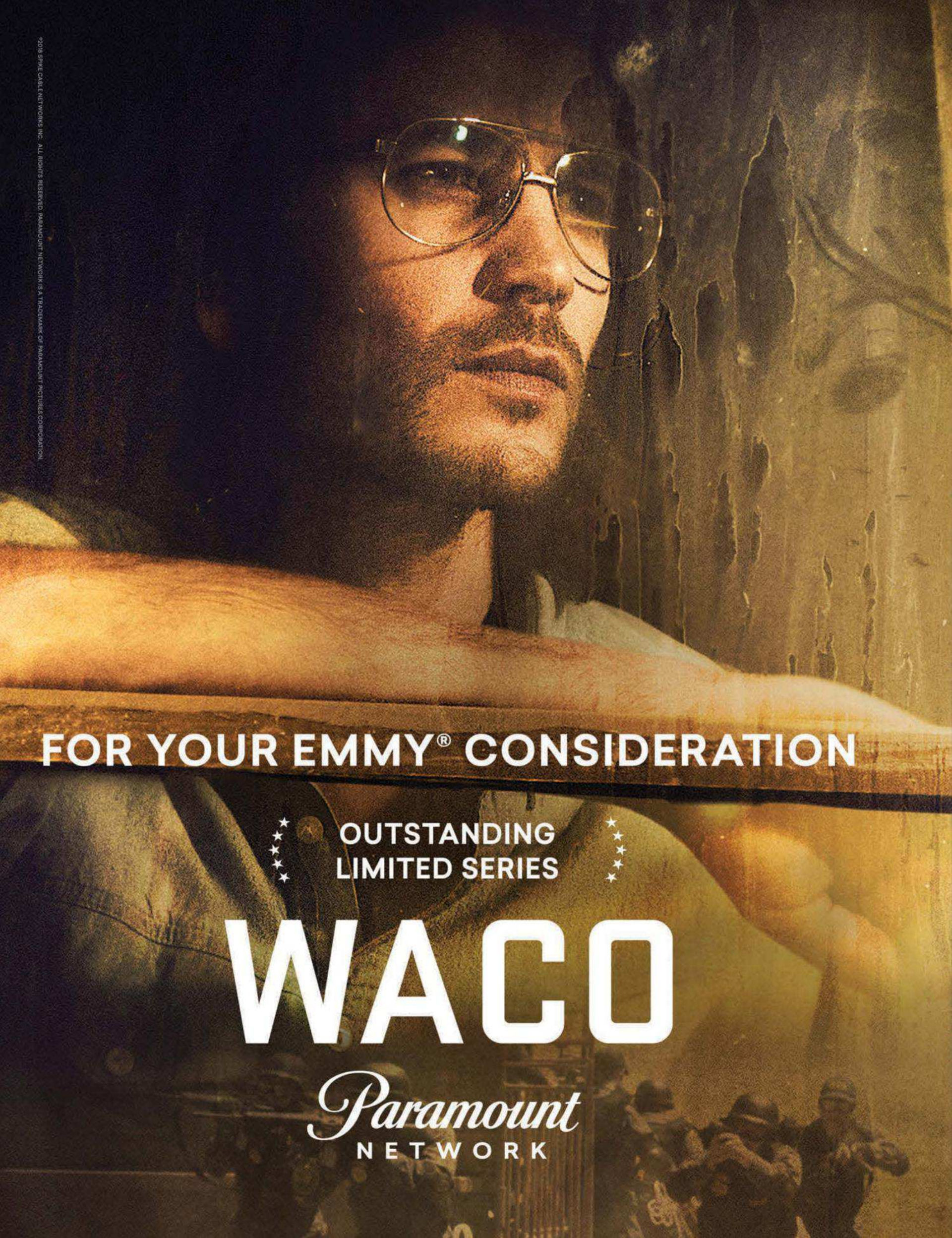


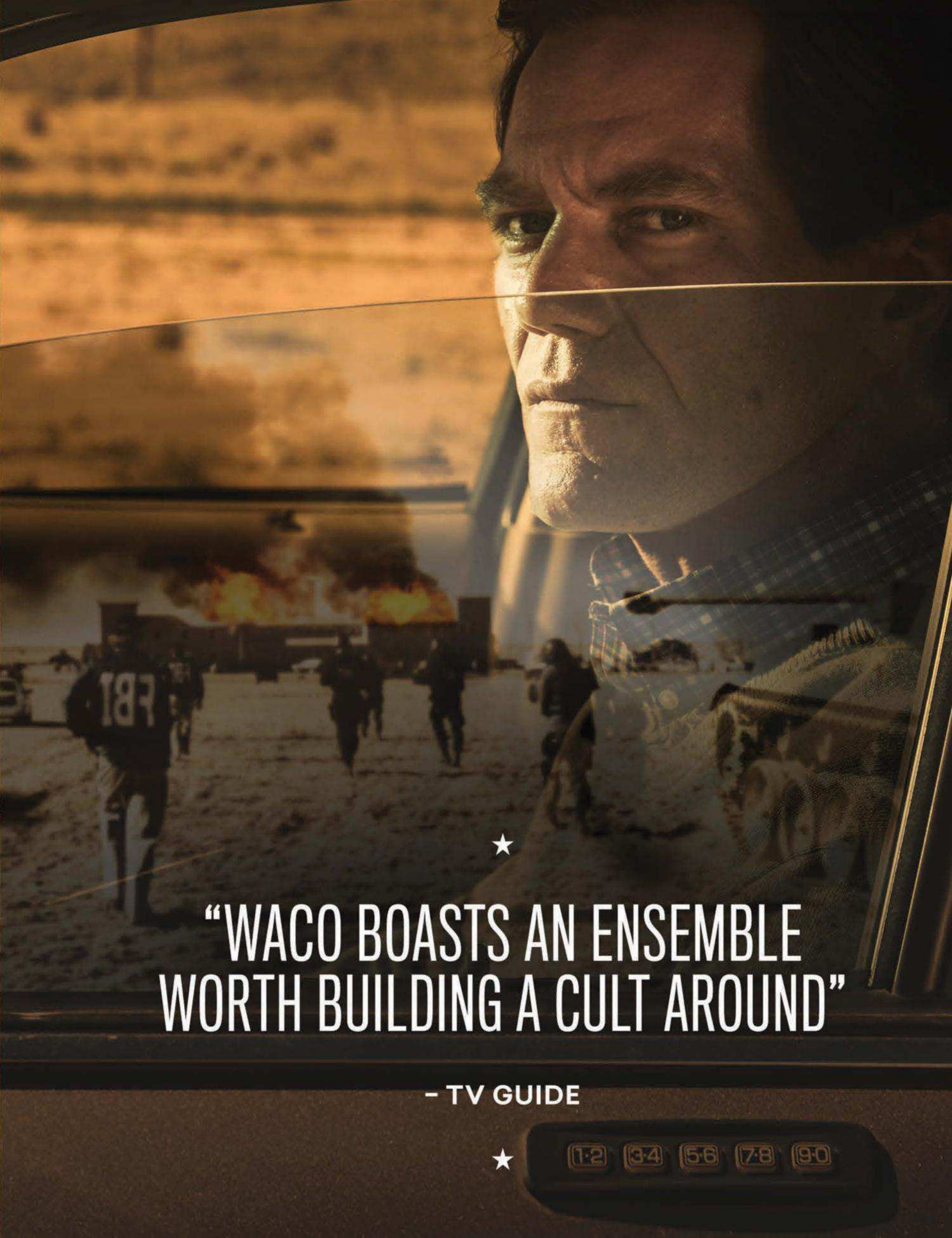
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**“WACO BOASTS AN ENSEMBLE
WORTH BUILDING A CULT AROUND”**

- TV GUIDE

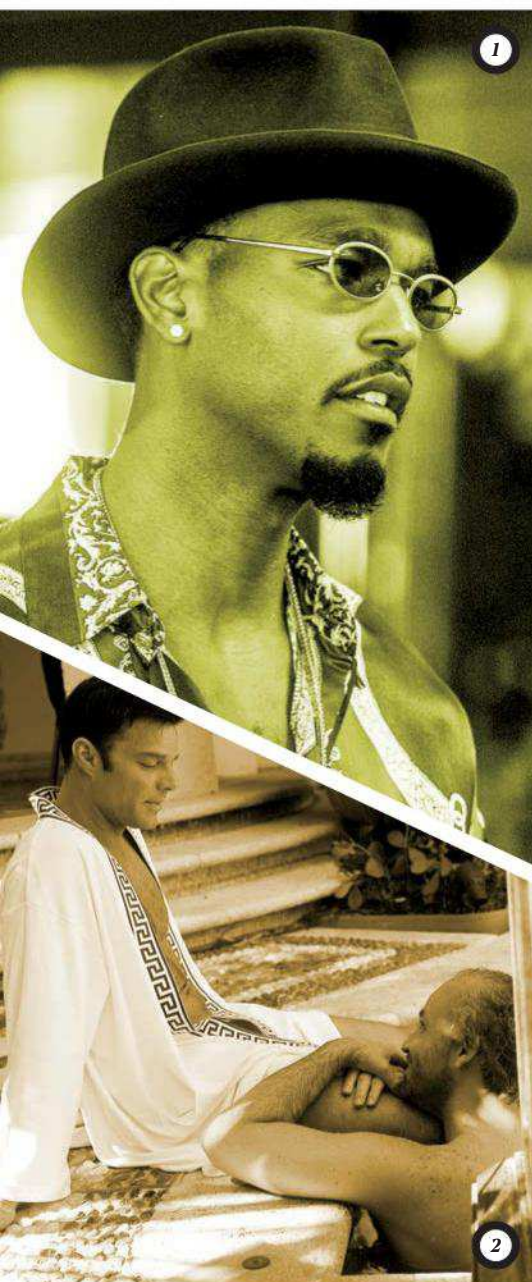


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surprise and irony into events by juxtaposing what the younger character was expecting was going to happen with what really happened," he says.

While the consensus is that spinning reality into a working narrative is often a tougher nut to crack than fiction, those who have turned it into an art form have learned to embrace the challenge.

"I've really gotten to enjoy it," says Biller. "We might know what happened when these characters emerge from the room, but we have to ask ourselves, 'What could they possibly have said to each other that would make them emerge from the room with this outcome?' It's a really fun challenge." **THR**



1 Luke James as Sean Combs in *Unsolved*.
2 Ricky Martin (left) and Edgar Ramirez in *Versace*.

Q&A

Killer Role

Jessica Biel returned to TV after a 15-year break — this time, with a producer credit — to play a murderer

BY KATIE KILKENNY

Best known for her onscreen roles, Jessica Biel was a central figure in developing *The Sinner* — USA's eight-episode limited series about a quiet mother's very public murder of a young man — and stewarding the mystery drama to TV, and into a second-season renewal. She and producing partner Michelle Purple became attached to the adaptation of Petra Hammesfahr's 1999 novel when the story was just in its manuscript stage.

"I really got a very authentic, shot-out-of-the-cannon experience as a producer for the first time in a really big way," Biel says. The 36-year-old star spoke with *THR* about how the show resonates in the wake of the #MeToo movement and plans for season two.

What were the changes or directions that the series takes that you advocated for?

I think you can see my handprint in the casting. Also in really developing the Harry Ambrose character [played by Bill Pullman]: That core character was very well-developed and thought-out in the book, but for the television audience and format we wanted to expand that character.

The Sinner is in so many ways about trauma that women experience. It aired just before the #MeToo reckoning. What do you hope people will take away from the story in this context?

I hope it's part of the conversation and the narrative that now, as female collaborators around the world, we take a piece of art like this and say once again, "This is another reason that we have to stand up and speak out and not be afraid of the consequences of saying the truth or the shame or the guilt."

The Sinner was the top new cable series of the year. What accounts for that success?

Maybe there was an undercurrent of something going on [before the #MeToo movement] that was subconscious, that we couldn't put our fingers on but was touching a nerve, culturally. This business also has such an element of luck, like lightning in a bottle — sometimes you catch it and most times you don't, but this particular time we maybe had a little luck on our side.

The Sinner was renewed for a second season. Will you be involved?

I'll definitely be involved as a producer. I can't really say much at this point without giving



Biel (right, with Nadia Alexander) received a Golden Globe nomination for best actress for her work on *The Sinner*.

anything away how much I will be involved onscreen — that's still being developed and looked at. But lucky for me, no matter what I will always be able to be a part of the show and I'm very proud of it.

You took time off from TV after 7th Heaven. What was behind that 15-year hiatus and what brought you back?

There wasn't like a driving force behind it. I got on a path of doing films. But, as we all know, the film industry has become very limited. I wanted to take control of my career again, which is what I had in mind when I started this small production company [Iron Ocean Studios]. I felt that it was my duty to step into my own and say, "You can't just sit back and wait for someone to call you; this is not how careers are built. You have to

step forward, develop material, find things and get behind them." I felt finally confident in my life, as a person, to do that. Also, television was changing: It's become such an incredible place where if you have a thought-out, interesting, fresh idea, you have a great opportunity, especially as a woman, to put something on television.

What are you working on now?

I'm developing a satirical puppet series called *Going Doll* that's *Muppets* meets *South Park* meets the *Housewives*. We're developing a couple of other TV shows and producing a film based on a popular YA book. I'm working on my [sex-positive initiative] Tryst Network content, and being a mom and trying to have my own time and do things for myself. **THR**

KATHRYN NEWTON

WILLA FITZGERALD

ANNES ELWY

MAYA HAWKE



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The Alchemy and the Agony of Adapting a Classic Novel for TV

'I'm very aware that most adaptations are judged not on what they contain, but on what they leave out,' says one writer of the challenges of transforming a beloved book into a small-screen series **BY BRYN ELISE SANDBERG**



Alias Grace (Netflix)

SARAH POLLEY, WRITER
Novel by Margaret Atwood



Polley

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I first read the book when I was 17 years old, and I remember little else of that year besides the transformative experience of reading that book, over and over again. It reached deep into me, in a way I'm not sure I completely understood at the time. It addressed things that were hidden from me, but pertinent to my life: the

splitting off that can happen in a personality when someone has been harassed or assaulted or has come of age in a world where women are prey, the ephemeral nature of memory and the idea that we're all unreliable narrators.

WHAT WAS KEPT FROM THE BOOK

It was extremely important to me to keep the immigration from Ireland, in all its squalor and struggle, in the show. It was expensive, and it would have been an obvious thing to cut, but I felt that — especially in this political

climate — it was important to show how hard and brutal it can be to have to leave home and seek refuge somewhere else, and to remind people who take their citizenship and rights for granted that this is how most of our ancestors, grandparents or parents got here.

WHAT WAS CHANGED

I made the history of sexual abuse in Grace's past, with her father, more pointed and literal, and I tracked the line of her trauma and dissociation to this part of her history. I wanted

to create a more obvious narrative of harassment and abuse and what that can do to a person. The pieces of the puzzle were in the book, but I wanted to shine a light on that aspect of it more glaringly. When I wrote it, I thought I would have to explain this decision or that people would miss that thread. As it turned out, the series came out at the same time as the #MeToo movement, so no explanation was needed and everyone seemed to get it. It was a shocking, thrilling surprise.

ANOTHER BOOK I'D LOVE TO SEE

ADAPTED *The Journalist and the Murderer* by Janet Malcolm

1 Sarah Gadon stars in *Alias Grace* as a woman imprisoned for a murder that she may or may not have orchestrated. **2** The four-part series *Howards End* stars Hayley Atwell.

Howards End (Starz)

COLIN CALLENDER,
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Novel by E.M. Forster



Callender

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I first read E.M. Forster's novel when I was a student. Professor White was my English teacher and we studied the story of the Schlegels, the Wilcoxes and the Basts, discussing at length the themes of class, social mores and the changing cultural landscape of turn-of-the-century England. But when I reread the book as an adult, and as the father of two teenage daughters, the story of Margaret and Helen, the two Schlegel sisters, took on a completely different and strikingly contemporary resonance. Here were two smart, independent, single-minded young women in search of their own identities, navigating the tough and often confusing realities of a man's world and struggling to make their way with integrity and without compromise. It seemed relevant to the world we live in.

WHAT WAS KEPT FROM THE BOOK

Though we wanted to place the story of Margaret and Helen center stage, it was very important to remain faithful to the story and broader themes of such a famous and well-read novel.

WHAT WAS CHANGED [Screenwriter]

Kenneth Lonergan was concerned that the two main romantic relationships in the story would be difficult to dramatize because both girls were so intellectual in their attachment to other people, but most of all he was not sure the book explored fully why Helen was drawn into a relationship with the character of Bast. At first, Kenneth was reluctant to adapt the novel for these reasons, but I persuaded him that his concerns were the very reasons I thought he would be great to adapt the book.

ANOTHER BOOK I'D LOVE TO SEE

ADAPTED J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*

Q&A

Margaret Atwood

The writer of *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Alias Grace* reflects on authorship and ownership **BY DANIEL J. FIENBERG**

In 2017, television finally caught up with 78-year-old Canadian literary icon Margaret Atwood and her work's feminist themes and dark undercurrents. Atwood was front and center as Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale* dominated the Emmys. Sarah Polley and Mary Harron's adaptation of her historical novel *Alias Grace* premiered to acclaim at the Toronto International Film Festival and on Netflix. She even had a children's show, *Wandering Wenda*, on CBC Television. Atwood spoke to *THR* about why 2017 was such a special year, *Alias Grace* lead Sarah Gadon and how *Handmaid's Tale* has "escaped from the covers" of the book.

What did it feel like to receive that standing ovation at the Emmys?

We didn't know it was coming, of course. I had a coach who's another Canadian. She plays a Martha in the show. So she was sitting beside me and when Bruce [Miller]

got [a writing Emmy], she said, "Oh, we've got a chance." And then when Ann Dowd got it, she said, "Wow, we've got an even bigger chance!" Then when Elisabeth Moss got it, she said, "Get ready! Get ready!"

It's been discussed very amply why 2017 was such an appropriate time for your themes to hit home, but why do you think TV, as a medium, was so ready for you in 2017?

I think because this new platform had come along, which is the streamed series. That allows more complex novels to expand to the length of time that is appropriate for them, rather than squishing them into 90 minutes or 60 minutes. The new platform has allowed a number of longer works to find the shape that's more appropriate for them. *Alias Grace* started out as a feature film, and then Sarah Polley said, "It's too long. Would you mind terribly if I made it into a six-part miniseries?" And I



Moss in *The Handmaid's Tale*.



"If I had known yes or no, it wouldn't have been nearly as interesting," says Atwood of the mystery at the center of *Alias Grace*, which explores a young woman's innocence or guilt.

said, "What's that?" That's what she did, and it's appropriate, and it allows it to have the pace that it requires.

Sarah Gadon's performance in *Alias Grace* involves at least three different characters. What made you think she could handle it?

She has an extremely flexible face. You saw in the opening sequence when she's saying, "Some people think I'm this, some people think I'm that," and she doesn't overdo it. It's just a slight shift. And she looks like a very different person. You cannot tell whether you're looking at an innocent person proclaiming her innocence or whether you're looking at a guilty person covering up.

Has there been a shift in how proprietary you feel toward *Handmaid's Tale* now that the series has moved past your book?

It's one of those books that has escaped

from the covers. It's out there in the world, so it has taken on a meaning that it did not have in 1984 or 1985, because in 1984 or 1985, the political events we see unrolling before us had not yet happened. This happens to a lot of books — they get read in different ways depending on what then happens.

That makes it easier for you to let go, the fact that it's been out there?

I don't think it makes it easier or harder. It's just a thing that happens to some books, and you cannot control that, because as soon as you publish a book, it's no longer in the hands of the writer. If you want to retain control of a book, you don't publish it. Then it's all yours forever. Until, of course, you croak and then somebody finds it in a suitcase. A book out in the world is in the hands of its readers, and they will interpret it no matter what you say. **THR**

Little Women (PBS)

HEIDI THOMAS, WRITER/
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Novel by Louisa May Alcott



Thomas

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I was 8 years old — my mother gave me her own childhood copy to read. I fell deeply in love with the March girls and their world, and wanted to be the fifth sister. I reread the novel many times over the ensuing decades, but because of the power of that first, very juvenile, encounter, I suspect I always saw it through a child's eyes. Sitting down to adapt it for the screen in 2017, as a 55-year-old woman, I was stunned to realize how deep, complex and multilayered it actually is.

WHAT WAS KEPT FROM THE BOOK

I'm very aware that most adaptations are judged not on what they contain, but on what they leave out! There were two aspects of the story that struck me as especially precious. Firstly, this isn't just a story about Jo. The story is very much about Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy, and I wanted us to spend time with the sisters as individuals and as a group, understanding what makes the family dynamic tick. So I only gradually closed in on Jo. Secondly, although the death of Beth is one of the most deeply felt events in literature, I believe that what comes after it — the absolute devastation of her surviving family — is one of the best depictions of grief in fiction. I felt we had to make room for that, and not treat the death as the end point of that story strand. Beth's death is, in fact, like all life's great sorrows, the beginning of so much more

WHAT WAS CHANGED It was essentially not a change at all, but simply a departure from the norm in terms of adaptation: I looked in depth at the Marmee who Louisa May Alcott created, and found myself stunned by her complexity, her self-knowledge, her resourcefulness and, most notably, her struggle to suppress her anger. Many adaptations present Marmee



as a patient, saintly figure — in fact, she is anything but, and she knows it.

ANOTHER BOOK I'D LOVE TO SEE

ADAPTED I feel *Villette*, by Charlotte Brontë, has been somewhat overlooked in the Victorian canon, as has *Esther Waters*, by George Moore. In terms of contemporary work, I'm a huge admirer of the Appalachian novelist Silas House. His novels have the most exquisite sense of place, and he draws female characters exceptionally well.

The Alienist (TNT)

JAKOB VERBRUGGEN,
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Novel by Caleb Carr



Verbruggen

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Carr's story is an epic roller-coaster ride that takes you on a journey deep into the dark and seedy

underbelly of New York in the late 19th century. This metropolis is

finding its own identity and faces issues that are still relevant today: class division, immigration, the old versus the new, how do we treat the weak in our society? The timelessness of this story is what resonated with me the most.

WHAT WAS KEPT FROM THE BOOK

The Alienist is a series of contrasts and we wanted to highlight these extremes — like the seediness of the brothels juxtaposed against the luxurious and excessive world of fine dining at Delmonico's. One of our main goals was to create a city symphony that brings the audience a unique insight into everyday life during the Gilded Age. Our obsessive research and the importance of detail were key to re-create a world that feels very authentic, visceral and real.

WHAT WAS CHANGED The book is told from Moore's POV. The audience is therefore unable to spend time with any of the characters when Moore's not present. In this

adaptation, the writers give equal importance to Laszlo Kreizler, Sara Howard and John Moore. This allowed us to spend more time with each character separately, mostly in a moment of introspection. The camera often overstays its welcome and lingers on the characters, which allows the audience to really get under the skin of these intriguing individuals — thereby having the viewer become the voyeur.

ANOTHER BOOK I'D LOVE TO SEE

ADAPTED *Days Without End* by Sebastian Barry. During the Indian Wars and Civil War, two former soldiers adopt a Native American girl. It's a relatable story about family and identity set against an epic backdrop. And *Raven's Gate* by Anthony Horowitz — an outcast teenage boy learns that he alone holds the power to protect the world from a nuclear disaster. This book has the potential to be an ecological thriller mixed with a coming-of-age tale.

1 "We had the delicious luxury of three hours in which to tell the story, so happily there were no major sacrifices," says writer Thomas of the *Little Women* adaptation starring Kathryn Newton (left) and Willa Fitzgerald. **2** Luke Evans plays a sketch artist tracking a serial killer in *The Alienist*.

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**SEVEN
SECONDS**

NETFLIX

INSIDE THE ICON

From troubled music stars to comedians battling their own demons, documentary specials reveal the complicated individuals living within larger-than-life figures

BY SHANNON L. BOWEN

Who is Jim Carrey, really? That's a question that Chris Smith's documentary *Jim & Andy: The Great Beyond* — featuring a very special, contractually obligated mention of Tony Clifton poses but doesn't quite answer. The Netflix doc special is a journey into the mind of the iconic actor, who, during the making of 1999's *Man on the Moon*, famously journeyed into the mind of comedian Andy Kaufman, who in turn occasionally dragged everyone around him into the mind of his insufferable alter ego Tony Clifton.

Thanks to clips from more than 100 hours of behind-the-scenes footage that collected dust in Carrey's office for nearly 20 years, it's clear that no one, including director Milos Forman, knew who was going to show up to set on any given day. Would it be Andy? Would it be Tony? The only thing anyone knew for sure was that it wouldn't be Jim Carrey.

"At some point," Carrey tells Smith during the film's only interview, "when you create yourself to make it, you're going to have to either let that creation go and

take a chance on being loved or hated for who you really are, or you're going to have to kill who you really are and fall into your grave grasping onto a character that you never were."

Such somber musings gave Smith a new respect for Carrey, says the director.

"I don't think I was fully aware of the depth of his character, sort of how humble and complicated and introspective he was," says Smith. "To me

the message of the movie is to really look at ourselves and react and understand that the things we're working toward, that we think are going to make us happy, may not in the end do that," he explains.

Revealing the human side (flaws and all) of entertainment icons was the main aspiration of

the documentary directors whose specials are circling the Emmy race. To do that, they had to mine old footage and often gained



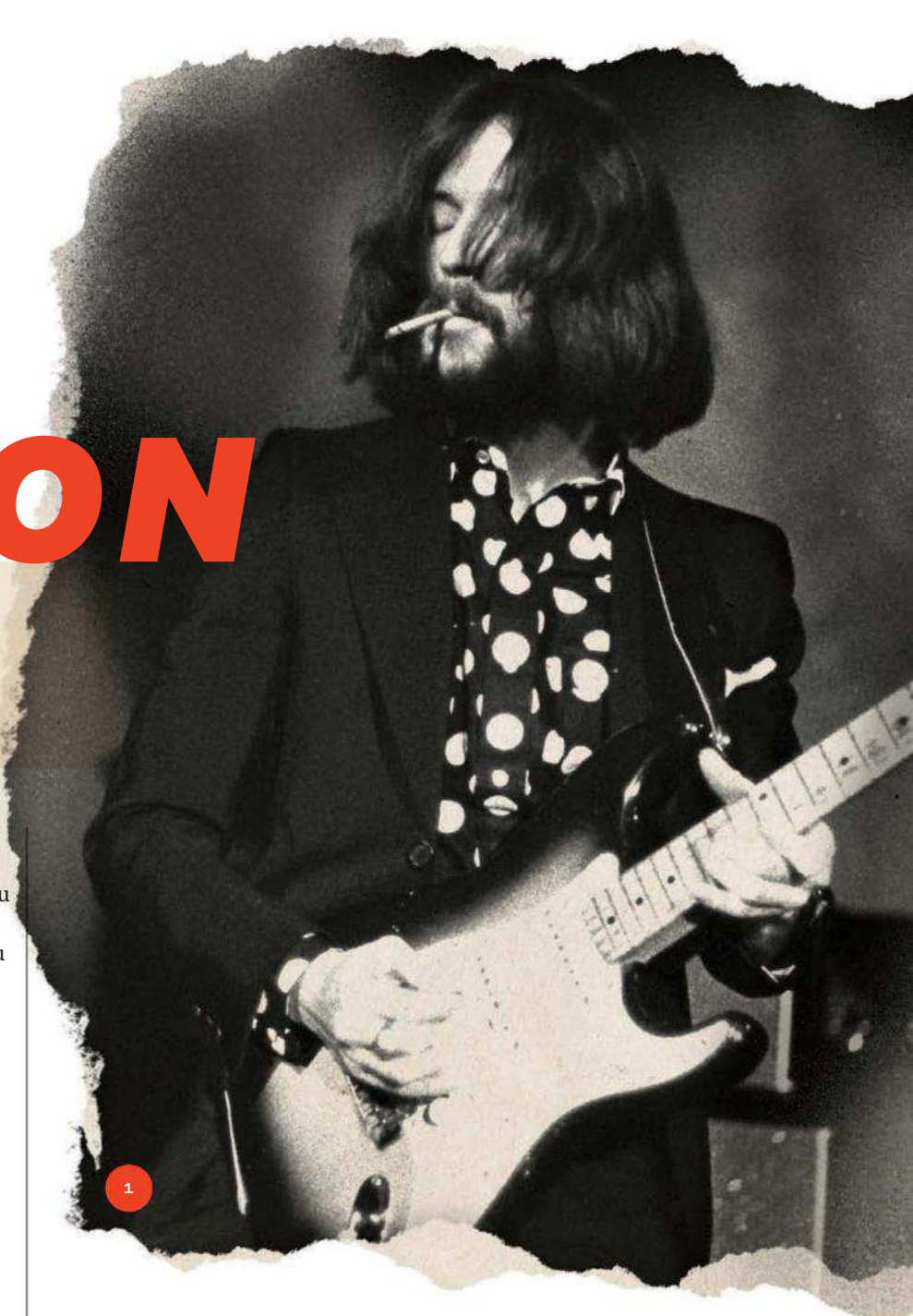
Forman



Apatow



Broomfield



1

impressive access to the subjects themselves — or if not, then to the figures closest to them.

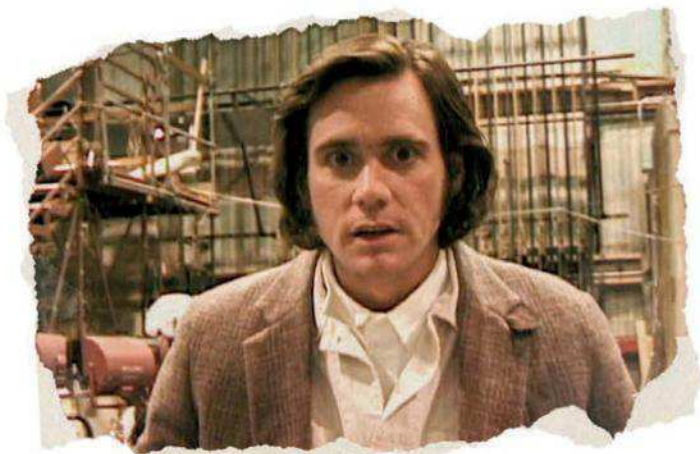
When it comes to Carrey, his existential ruminations are key to two of this year's doc specials — the other being HBO's *The Zen Diaries of Garry Shandling* from Judd Apatow.

"It was very important to me that Jim Carrey would talk about Garry for the film because they had been spending time together in the last year of Garry's life," says Apatow, who was one of Shandling's closest friends. "Jim is somebody that understands a lot of the spiritual issues that Garry was so interested in. And they had those conversations about what it means to be a creative person and how to balance life and the challenges of being a funny person in this business and in this world."

And like *Jim & Andy, Diaries* exists because of remarkable source material — in this case, three decades of Shandling's handwritten journals. Says Apatow, "We had the opportunity to go much deeper than a documentary usually can because we had insight into what he was thinking at each stage of his life."

Shots of Shandling's handwritten entries reveal that the late comedian was on a lifelong quest not only to be the funniest man on television but also to grow as a human being.

"It was great to see that when no one was looking, he was sitting alone trying to figure out how to be a kinder, more loving person," says Apatow. "He was a very sensitive person in what can be a very brutal business, and it always seemed to surprise him how bare-knuckled show business can be."



"I feel like Jim is someone who went to the other side of the mountain and came back and said, 'There's nothing there,'" says Smith.



The subjects of docs *Eric Clapton: Life in Twelve Bars* (1) and *Seeing Allred* (2) both participated in the films. Many of the late singer's close friends spoke for *Whitney: Can I Be Me* (3).

Another star ill-equipped for the harshness of the entertainment industry was Whitney Houston, who turned not to meditation — as Kaufman, Shandling and Carrey did — but to drugs. From her childhood in rough-and-tumble 1960s Newark, New Jersey, to her tragic death at age 48, Houston's story gets a warm retelling by director Nick Broomfield in Showtime's *Whitney: Can I Be Me*.

The title alludes to the crux of her issues and the film's central conflict: the friction between her two personas. There was Nippy, the impressionable young girl who grew up exposed to drugs and violence, and Whitney, the picture-perfect pop star whom Arista Records and Clive Davis groomed to be palatable to white audiences.

Davis declined to participate, saying he was working on his own documentary (2017's *Clive Davis: The Soundtrack of Our Lives*).

"He is quite defensive about his role with Whitney because I think he was very responsible for the Whitney Houston persona, which was so different from Nippy," says Broomfield. "Whitney's problem really stemmed from [the fact

that] whenever she was Nippy and wasn't Whitney Houston, the public somehow felt shortchanged."

Houston's estate also declined to participate. "They sent a mass email out to people who hadn't even heard from the estate for 30 years or more, saying they're doing their own film and they would appreciate if they didn't take part in the film I was making," says Broomfield.

A number of Houston's friends and colleagues did speak to Broomfield, but it's clips from hundreds of hours of never-before-seen footage shot by co-director Rudi Dolezal in the 1990s that provide the clearest view of her struggles.

Over the years, a number of companies and people, including Davis, had tried to buy the footage, but Dolezal wasn't selling.

"It took me a very long time to find Rudi. I don't think he wanted to be found," says Broomfield. "I think he wanted to have his own role and creativity reflected. He didn't just want to be an archive source, so that's kind of the arrangement that we made."

But Broomfield and Dolezal didn't connect until the film was nearly done, which meant an

eleventh-hour story reshaping.

Producer Marta Kauffman and directors Roberta Grossman and Sophie Sartain faced a similar challenge after they had picture-locked *Seeing Allred*, their Netflix doc about the life and career of civil rights attorney Gloria Allred.

The filmmakers had chronicled Allred's personal story, from her blue-collar youth in Philadelphia, to her rape in her 20s at gunpoint, to her relationship with her daughter, attorney Lisa Bloom. And they had woven it all together with the narrative of the Bill Cosby case, in which Allred represented a number of victims. Then the Harvey Weinstein scandal erupted.

"It exploded after we locked the film," recalls Kauffman. "So we had to go back in and add some of that. We had to because [otherwise] the film would have felt like it would have been topical a year ago and not today."

In fact, Weinstein was the filmmakers' second major pivot. The first was Hillary Clinton's loss to Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election. "The moment [in the film] where they're all watching [as the election results come in] and Gloria realizes — you can see that change in everybody," says Kauffman. "I hate to even admit this, but in a weird way it became a real emotional center to the film."

The filmmakers had planned a trip to Washington, D.C., for Clinton's inauguration, but they ended up going for the Women's March — and capturing one of



Kauffman



Zanuck

the film's most compelling scenes, when a male Trump supporter gets in Allred's face on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

But what makes the film compelling isn't the politics — it's the humanizing of Allred, a steely litigator and one of the most polarizing figures in today's cultural landscape.

If Allred is by her own admission a subject who has no problem not sharing — "It's not hard for me not to talk to people about things," she tells the directors — the subject of director

Lili Fini Zanuck's documentary was exactly the opposite.

In *Eric Clapton: Life in Twelve Bars*, the famed musician shared intimate details about everything from his decades of drinking and drugging to how he felt when his 4-year-old son Conor fell to his death from an open window.

It helped that Zanuck and Clapton were old friends. "We already had trust in our relationship, which you can tell from the film how open he was with me," says Zanuck, who reveals that it was Clapton who brought the project to her.

Zanuck began her work by searching for archival material. Clapton didn't have much in his possession, and he didn't know who did. But Zanuck found more than she knew what to do with, from YouTube clips to photos that Clapton's wife, Melia, had collected to old footage moldering in a shed in Devon, England.

Zanuck decided to eschew celebrity interviews in favor of conversations with people who knew the real Clapton, like longtime friend and collaborator Ben Palmer. "[Celebrity interviews] don't do you a lot of good sometimes because it's very hard to get a great guitar player to wax on about how good Eric is, just by the nature of their egos being involved," says Zanuck.

The result of her choices is a portrait of a human being who has suffered immensely, made bad decisions, struggled to find himself and lived to tell the tale — all in the public eye.

"The thing that's so great about it is that he survived," Zanuck says, "and he survived in kind of a glorious way."

Clapton's story resonates "for the same reason that the blues resonates," she says. "You're looking at so much pain and so much tragedy, and even if you haven't had that same amount or your life hasn't been like that, you feel that you can empathize."

Apatow echoes that sentiment: "When people watch [*Diaries*], they have a powerful emotional reaction to it. An enormous amount of people have written me very long letters about what Garry's story brings up for them." **THR**

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GANGSTERS AND GARBAGE

TV documentarians found hope and humor in three diverse subjects: a surgeon turned comedian, a Miami arms trafficker and the food waste epidemic **BY DON STEINBERG**

TICKLING GIANTS

Starz

Of the many spinoffs and imitations that Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show* has spawned, maybe none has been as fascinating as *Al-Bernameg*, Egyptian for "The Show." Sara Taksler's *Tickling Giants* documents the rise and fall of this daring political satire program, which Bassem Youssef, a 37-year-old cardiothoracic surgeon, started in the laundry room of his Cairo apartment in 2011.

The charismatic Youssef became one of Egypt's most famous faces with a lovingly spot-on imitation of Stewart. *The Show* became a sensation, moving from YouTube to national TV before government authorities, unhappy with the mockery, forced it off the air in 2014.

Taksler, a producer on *The Daily Show* since 2005, met Youssef when he was a Stewart guest in 2012 and proposed documenting his show. "We never could have imagined how much was going to happen when he said yes," she says. "I thought, 'I'll follow him for two months to see what it's like to make a comedy show in a place where free speech is not necessarily acceptable.' I had no clue." They ended up shooting through 2014.

The documentary opens with Youssef's decision to switch from medicine to comedy as a way to make a difference, then covers two violent regime changes in Egypt. *The Show* cracks jokes all along the way. It gets dropped by one skittish TV network, then picked up by



Youssef (left) on his show *Al-Bernameg*.

another before Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's regime finally succeeds in killing it off.

"I didn't discuss the movie at all publicly when we were filming," says Taksler. "One of my crewmembers was beaten up for his footage." Amid threats and fears for his family's safety, Youssef never dilutes the jokes. Once, Stewart is flown in as a secret guest and escorted onto the set with a black bag over his head. "Satire gets you into trouble," Youssef says, to which Stewart replies: "It doesn't get me into the kind of trouble it gets you into."



WASTED! THE STORY OF FOOD WASTE

Starz

A film about garbage that somehow whets viewers' appetite to cook a delicious meal? Directors Anna Chai and Nari Kye wanted to avoid a grim tone in their doc about food waste — in hopes of making it an appealing learning experience. "It doesn't gross you out, and it doesn't freak you out. That was a big goal of ours," says Kye.

The film reveals that one-third of

↑ *Wasted!* reveals that the annual cost of food waste has reached \$1 trillion.

all food produced worldwide is never eaten. Ninety percent of American food waste ends in landfills, where it oozes ozone-destroying methane.

"Once you know some of the statistics, it's hard to throw food away," says Chai. "Everybody's guilty of it. So it's

one of the few problems in the world that you can influence individually."

Star chef Anthony Bourdain produced the doc; it was financed by the Rockefeller Foundation, which aims to cut global food waste in half by 2030. "Chefs really hate wasting anything," says Kye. "Tony [Bourdain] was saying, 'Hey, can we shame people into not wasting food?'"

But instead of shaming, the filmmakers offer a gentle nudge, highlighting programs throughout the world that are making a difference thanks to innovators like chef Dan Barber of Blue Hill in Manhattan. Barber creates restaurant delicacies from parts of food plants — stems, flowers, leaves — that are normally thrown away. At an elementary school in New Orleans, kids grow vegetables and compost organic waste. There's a beer called Toast that's made out of unwanted bread.

"Everybody who sees the movie wants to run out and get a compost bin," says Chai. "It is a hopeful story."

OPERATION ODESSA

Showtime

Tiller Russell says the making of his documentary *Operation Odessa* was "as insane as the movie itself."

"A narc I know called me with a tip," says Russell, who writes for such TV dramas as *Chicago Fire* and *Chicago P.D.* and directs docs about cops and crime. "He said, 'There's this Russian gangster named Tarzan who had a strip club in Miami. He tried to sell a \$50 million Russian submarine to the Cali drug cartel. This dude is locked up in a Panamanian prison right now, and he has a BlackBerry. Do you want his phone number?' I said, 'Hell, yes.'"

The result is a comedic doc about mobster bromance that took Russell and his crew all over the world, from Miami to Brooklyn to Moscow.

Tarzan is Ludwig Fainberg, a Russian who worked in the blossoming 1980s drug trafficking scene in Miami. After the Soviet Union fell in 1991, Tarzan began selling Russian motorcycles and military helicopters, eventually connecting with a mysterious Cuban man known as Tony, who said the cartel would be interested in a Russian submarine. The FBI, DEA and others were listening via a task force named Operation Odessa.

Russell flew to Panama to meet the imprisoned Tarzan, "this giant, sweaty Russian bear of a man," the filmmaker says. "Then he opens



Operation Odessa, which profiles Fainberg (aka Tarzan), debuted March 31.

his mouth, and it's this loquacious, charismatic mobster who felt like he jumped out of a Scorsese movie." But Russell says the Russian mob had been tipped off, and Tarzan was afraid to talk.

Years later, Russell got an email from Tarzan with the subject line "Jailbreak!!!" He'd busted out of Panama, caught a boat to Cuba and landed in Moscow. "He told me if I could get to Moscow in five days he was ready to start making the movie," Russell recalls.

"All these crooks are huge movie buffs," the filmmaker explains of his subject's eagerness. "They think, 'My story is worthy of being part of that gangster movie canon.'"

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Wild Wild Country

NETFLIX



COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Producer Darren Aronofsky recruited astronauts for environmental series *One Strange Rock*: 'It's easy to forget that this planet, our home, has been handed down to us' **BY KATIE KILKENNY**

After nearly three decades of making films on a spectrum of subjects — ballet, wrestling, drugs — in the past few years, Darren Aronofsky has settled on a common theme: the environment. In 2017, the helmer released the divisive environmental allegory *mother!* and enlisted Patti Smith and Jessica Chastain to narrate a VR experience about the cosmos, *Spheres*. His latest effort to get viewers to preserve the planet, *One Strange Rock*, is a National Geographic Channel informational series about the complex, interlocking systems that keep Earth running.

Aronofsky and production company Protozoa Pictures worked with British documentary producers Nutopia to film for 100 weeks in 45 countries and combine an array of branches of science into one narrative. As executive producer, Aronofsky helped brainstorm using astronauts and their insights about the planet

to structure the broad-reaching narrative. (Will Smith serves as narrator of the series.)

Aronofsky, 49, spoke to *THR* about the complexities of production, his environmental work and the state of U.S. climate policy.

As an executive producer, what did you specifically bring to the project?

First, I'm a storyteller, so I was trying to figure out how to combine all these different sciences into a story that had an emotional impact. At a certain point, we came up with the idea to use astronauts as our narrators to lead us through the history of the planet. That also allowed us to explore their personal stories. One thing that really stuck out to me was that all of these astronauts had a similar experience, that if they went into space for eight days or they went into space for 665 days, they all went through the spiritual transformation — it's called the cosmic consciousness or the overview effect, and it's basically this way



of looking at the planet as one huge system. That gave us the narrative and underlying themes of the show: that all of these different systems on the planet work together to allow life to happen.

What differentiates *One Strange Rock* from other docuseries about the wonders of Earth?

Instead of focusing on just animals like *Planet Earth*, we actually work with all the different sciences. It was about taking astronomy, anthropology, sociology, chemistry, physics

and biology and blending them into one single story because that's how all of these different astronauts perceive the planet when they think about it. And so we really wanted to do a global presentation about Mother Earth and how Mother Earth works.

Were there any specific challenges that came up because you were doing something so epic?

We shot in the coldest place on the planet and the hottest place on the planet; we also shot in a space station. It was about shooting that



1 Scientists walk through an acidic landscape in *One Strange Rock*.
2 An asteroid impact crater viewed from space.
3 In November 2017, Aronofsky directed Smith (left) on a *One Strange Rock* set in Surrey, England.
4 A VFX-enhanced view of Earth from the International Space Station.



type of stuff in new and unique ways. The space station is a good example: When I talked to the astronaut that did the work, Paolo [Nespoli], I wanted it to not look like all the other footage that had been shot, so I gave him specific lighting ideas — I said, “Can we turn off all the lights in the space station so that the inside is just lit by the sun and the reflection of the sun off of the Earth?” It gave it a very dramatic look.

Why did you choose Will Smith to narrate?

The science of the film is very accurate and sometimes it gets very heavy. So we wanted to try to have an ambassador who could broaden the audience so that it wasn't just science fans. Will can very much lean into being the everyman — he communicates with the world really well and has the biggest social media presence now as far as celebrities go. So he has that great ability to make things that are hard to relate to really connectable.

You've said that *One Strange Rock* aims to help viewers understand why they need to be “stewards” of the planet. How so?

It's a little bit like a beautiful watch that gets handed down from your ancestors: There's just so much respect for this beautiful pocket watch that you're given and there's respect for all of the knobs and wheels inside of it. It's easy to forget that this planet, our home, has been handed down to us. Unless you open up the back and look at all those knobs and wheels and gears that make it work, sometimes it's hard to [remember] how intricate and how beautiful all those different parts [are] that work together to tell time. So that was the strategy with this: “Hey, let's look at all the beautiful parts and all the different systems that work together to allow for life on Earth to exist.”

How would you hope viewers feel after watching this series?

What's interesting about when you watch the show is that there's a lot of science, but as the show builds each hour, it suddenly turns kind of emotional. And it's a weird emotional reaction — some of it's an emotional reaction to the story of the astronaut in the episode, and also it's about how different science works together to make it possible for these beautiful lives we have to exist on this planet. That's the unique thing about the show: Through ideas and knowledge, it gives you this

emotional appreciation of your surroundings. Celebrating the Earth and celebrating how amazing all these systems are means you'll take things less for granted and maybe have more respect for our shared home.

***One Strange Rock* is part of a larger body of recent environmentally focused work for you including *mother!* and *Spheres*. What inspired these efforts?**

My father was a science teacher, so I was always interested in science, and that led me to an interest in the environment. Also, growing up in New York City, in the concrete jungle, I wanted to get out of New York City and witness nature. When I was in high school, I started to work with this school called The School for Field Studies, which basically trains young people to become the next generation of environmentalists. I traveled with them to environmentally sensitive areas. I went to Prince William Sound [in Alaska] two years before the Exxon Valdez spill. I was lucky to witness that place when it was completely pristine. But then to watch on TV as it was devastated woke me up about how important it was to protect these incredible places.

The head of the EPA is actively throwing doubt on climate change, and the U.S. has backed out of an international climate accord. What can filmmaking accomplish in this political climate?

Everyone should be working on this issue. It's crazy that science is being cherry-picked for political reasons. Science is science; it's not political. To turn your back on the accepted science that humans are affecting climate and that this is having incredibly devastating effects is just political and isn't truthful to what's happening. The result is that we're heading in the wrong direction, and it's an extremely scary situation. We're starting to see the effects, the results of us burning fossil fuels on this planet, and yet it's being completely ignored for greed and political reasons. It's a scary time, and whatever form we can work in, we need to work in and push forward the truth. **THR**

DOCUMENTARY DABLERS

How 5 narrative helmers made the move to nonfiction



13TH
Ava DuVernay

DuVernay, the helmer of *Selma* and *A Wrinkle in Time*, directed and produced Netflix's examination of mass incarceration, which garnered an Oscar nomination and won the Emmy for documentary special in 2017.



AND EVERYTHING IS GOING FINE
Steven Soderbergh

He's produced numerous docs but has directed only one: the 2010 film about monologist Spalding Gray. He chose to focus the film solely on archival footage instead of any new interviews with those who knew Gray.



STORIES WE TELL
Sarah Polley

Polley, known as an actress and for helming 2006's *Away From Her*, turned the cameras on herself for this 2012 doc, revealing secrets buried by her parents, British actor Michael Polley and TV personality Diane Polley.



THE CRUISE
Bennett Miller

The *Moneyball* and *Foxcatcher* director's only doc was his debut project, a 1998 movie about Timothy “Speed” Levitch, a NYC bus tour guide known for his unique narrative style and worldview.



VOYAGE OF TIME
Terrence Malick

The auteur's doc, covering everything from the creation of the universe to life's extinction, was released both as a 40-minute Imax movie narrated by Brad Pitt and a 90-minute doc narrated by Cate Blanchett. — REBECCA FORD

ROCK: COURTESY OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (3); ARONOFSKY: MATT FROST/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC; 13TH: COURTESY OF NETFLIX; EVERYTHING IS GOING FINE: COURTESY OF IFC; FILMS: STORIES WE TELL: COURTESY OF IFC; CRUISE: COURTESY OF IFC; VOYAGE OF TIME: COURTESY OF IFC

‘LIKE A TRIAGE DOCTOR,’

Six documentarians reveal how they crafted series that delve into food, culture, crime and politics – and what they had to leave out to make their stories work **BY JORDAN RIEFFE**

THE CIRCUS (SHOWTIME)

John Heilemann, co-host

Now in its third season, this documentary series gets behind the scenes of Washington headlines.

I’ve resigned myself to the notion that we can’t literally be everywhere at once. But when Trump makes big news, he tends to make it on Twitter, so it’s not like we’re going to the presidential bedroom to shoot him in his bathrobe tweeting.

The biggest challenge is always to try to shoot events that are widely and highly covered but shoot them in a different way, more cinematic and in a way that other people don’t get. If we could shoot in the Lincoln Bedroom with Trump, that would be the best. If we can’t, can we be in the kitchen with him while he’s eating a hamburger?

The Trump administration is more chaotic than any administration I’ve ever covered. Every administration is more chaotic on the inside than it is on the outside. But whatever your wildest imagination of chaos in the Trump administration, take that and multiply it by six or nine — then you get what it’s like on the inside. I think we’re headed toward more turbulence rather than less.

THE FOURTH ESTATE (SHOWTIME)

Liz Garbus, director

This four-part series lives in the newsroom of *The New York Times*, chronicling the daily grind of the press under unprecedented levels of scrutiny.

It was a crazy year in newsrooms in our country. It was like rolling with the punches, being there at the right time with the right reporters.

Unpredictability for us was a huge challenge, just figuring out how to allocate our resources. We probably shot between 500 and 600 hours to make a four-and-a-half-hour series. So that floor in that cutting room is pretty big. And of course there were gems and there were things we loved that we didn’t use, and that’s always a little heartbreaking.

But I think the even greater challenge was at the heart of what we were doing, which was working with journalists and making them feel comfortable while they were dealing with confidential sources. The series is called *The Fourth Estate* for a reason. A free press is a key ingredient to a functioning democracy. That’s why we’re making this film, and I think that’s why *The Times* let me. I was a real pain in the ass for them, but showing how they do what they do, how careful they are to get it right, even if that means losing a scoop — Trump tweets about them or disparages them, they go about their day. Nobody takes it personally or gets offended, they go about their jobs.

THE TRADE (SHOWTIME)

Matt Heineman, director

The opioid crisis gets a full airing in this five-part series looking at cartels, users and law enforcement.

I like to keep an open mind, and I think that’s the most exciting way to make documentaries like this, letting the story dictate where you want to go. It’s constantly evolving and constantly changing as the realities on the ground constantly shift, especially when you’re dealing with a subject like the opioid epidemic and looking at this issue through these three lenses: cartel members in Mexico, addicts in the U.S. and law enforcement in the U.S.

You’re dealing generally with people who don’t necessarily want to be filmed. It took a long, long time to get access and gain the trust of our subjects. There are certain storylines that we started filming that didn’t ultimately arc or get fulfilled in a way that made sense for the show. When you’re dealing with addiction, despite loving families, despite community support, despite whatever it is trying to help you get out of the cycle, it is really, really tough to kick. So many of the addicts that we filmed we thought perhaps were on a path to recovery, but then they relapsed, and this is very commonplace.

We need to stop thinking of this issue as a war that we can fight. The idea that we can put up a wall and this issue will be fixed is laughable. It’s basic economics, supply and demand. As long as there’s a demand for drugs in the U.S., there will be supply coming from Mexico and South America. So, we need to view this less as a war and more as a health-care crisis.





1 *The Trade* is Heineman's follow-up to 2015's *Cartel Land*. 2 Burns' *Vietnam War* spans more than 17 hours. 3 *Ugly Delicious* follows Majordomo chef Chang. 4 Season three of *The Circus* includes Mark Zuckerberg's congressional testimony. 5 *The Fourth Estate* shot for 14 months at *The New York Times*. 6 *Wormwood* subject Olson died under mysterious circumstances in 1953.



THE VIETNAM WAR (PBS)

Ken Burns, director

This 10-part account of the conflict includes interviews with civilians as well as Viet Cong soldiers.

It blew up any assumptions any of us had about the Vietnam War.

The challenges were logistical. How do you interview North Vietnamese and Viet Cong guerrillas and South Vietnamese soldiers who are still speaking only Vietnamese? And corraling the archives from Moscow to Beijing to Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City — hundreds, if not thousands, of archives we drew on for this production. But that's always our job, being a detective and finding the material.

There were wonderful scenes that didn't fit just because it didn't work in the arc of the episode or the arc of the entire 10-part series: the shooting of a water buffalo and the realization they have just taken away someone's livelihood and most likely driven them into the hands of the Viet Cong, regrets on the part of some demonstrators about things they said to returning veterans. With documentary, a filmmaker makes the decision about what lives and dies almost like a triage doctor.

War brings out the worst, but it also brings out the best. I'm drawn to war. This is what human beings do that does not commend them as the most intelligent species, but there are also pockets of humanity, fellowship and kindness and sacrifice and love that take place in war at the same kind of heightened degree that the bad stuff happens. So, when you study war, you study the best and the worst of us.

UGLY DELICIOUS (NETFLIX)

Morgan Neville, director

Star chef David Chang takes viewers around the world in an eight-part food series that has more on its mind than cuisine.

The show is really like a cultural debate show masquerading as a food show.

I usually make movies and shows about culture, but food is the most prevalent part of culture. Everybody has a relationship with food. Everybody has an opinion about food, whether or not you watch food shows. Each episode started with an idea, not food. That's a very different way of doing a food show. It's not just top down, and it's not just bottom up. It's everything. It's not just the Michelin star restaurants that tell you something about food or street food that tells you about food, but fast food tells you about food and — everything, whether it's mac and cheese at the Sizzler or whatever — also will tell you something about culture. Everything is open for discussion.

Through food you can talk about politics, immigration, economics, authenticity, appropriation, all kinds of questions that are all over the culture. It's asking a lot of big questions about food and not necessarily telling you the right way.

The biggest challenge was figuring out how to put this stuff together because what we did was sort of insanely ambitious. There was a scene shot at this fish sandwich place in Tokyo that was amazing and that didn't make it because it didn't fit in one of the episodes. The thing we all wanted to do was to be more like a documentary show. It was the idea of all of us trying to be in the moment and learn whatever we can because I like the feeling of this as a show that's loose; it gives it a different kind of energy. I think it opened up a lot of new ways of telling stories.

WORMWOOD (NETFLIX)

Errol Morris, director

Dramatic scenes, interviews and archival footage are employed in this genre-bending account of the mysterious death of Cold War military scientist Frank Olson.

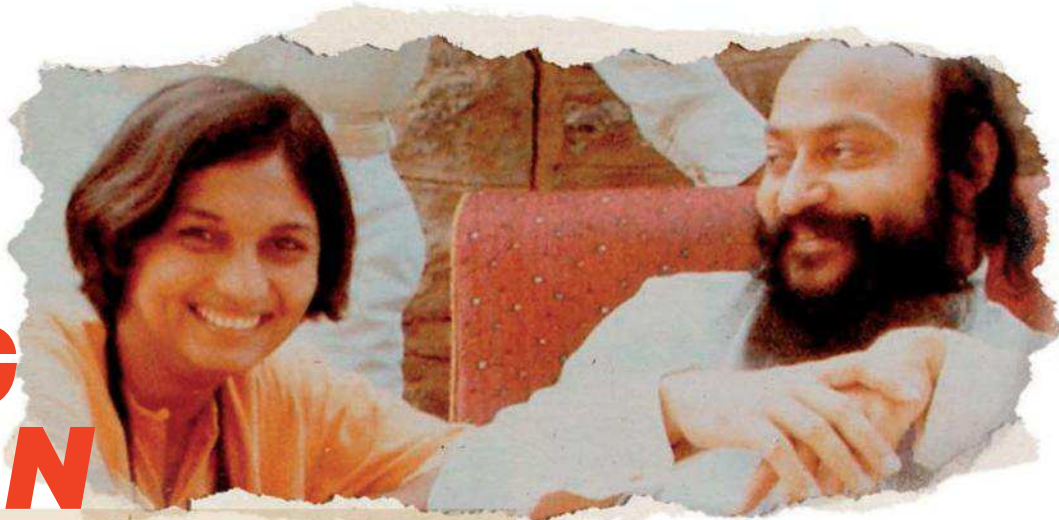
I've always looked at my films as experimental in nature and that I should always be trying things that are risky.

I know that I was blessed, I don't know how else to describe it, with such a wide variety, such a diversity of material. We produced a lot of archival materials, stuff that I'd never seen before. When you're really doing research, it's a constant surprise. Do we ever have total information? Of course we don't. We're always putting together a partial picture based on fragments. This is certainly true in *Wormwood*. Originally, I wanted there to be a lot more drama. But we had to cut, really, 40 pages from the script just because of budgetary considerations. There were scenes we never shot. We used everything.

Did I learn something? I learned an enormous amount, if only that I learned I can work with actors. Actors like me and I like actors — we work well together and I'd like to do more. To work with actors and create actual drama, not re-enactment but actual drama as part of *Wormwood*. I have wanted for some time to incorporate drama into what I do. Someone asked me why I make movies, and I answered, "Well, I make movies so I can make more." You do one, you finish it, and then it's time to make something else. I call *Wormwood* "the everything bagel," but I'd like to do more everything bagel projects. So more projects that use drama. In fact, I'd like to use it even more extensively but also use interview and archival material and home movies and the kitchen sink, if you like. **VIR**



FINDING RELIGION



The duo behind Netflix's *Wild Wild Country* reveal how 'a 30-second elevator pitch' from a film archivist led them to the fascinating hit cult story **BY BRYN ELISE SANDBERG**

Sheela (left) and the Bhagwan, whose unraveling relationship is chronicled in *Wild Wild Country*.

Since *Wild Wild Country*'s March debut, the gripping documentary series has become the latest unscripted phenomenon from Netflix. Executive produced by Mark and Jay Duplass, the series is the work of another set of filmmaking brothers, Chapman and Maclain Way, who made the 2014 documentary *The Battered Bastards of Baseball* for the platform. Over the course of six episodes, *Wild Wild Country* follows controversial Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (Osho), his one-time personal assistant Ma Anand Sheela and the "free love" cult they led in 1980s Oregon. The Way brothers spoke with *THR* about the genesis of the series, the one former cult member they couldn't get to talk and how they feel about a potential fictionalized retelling of the wild, wild story.

How did the idea for the show come about?

CHAPMAN WAY We spent a lot of time in the archives up in Oregon when we were doing *The Battered Bastards of Baseball*. The head film archivist at the Oregon Historical Society asked Mac and I what we were doing for our next project. He said he had this never-before-seen collection of 300 hours of archive footage on what he described as "the most bizarre story that ever happened in the history of Oregon." He gave us a quick 30-second elevator pitch and told us about this guru and his followers who built this \$100 million utopian city, and that they took over the local town and then bused in thousands of homeless people and armed themselves with assault rifles and then tried to take over the county and ended up poisoning 750 people. Mac and I just kind of looked at each other, like, "There's no way this is true. Like, how could we have grown up in America and never heard about this story?" We started doing some research, and sure enough, everything he had told us actually did happen — so we jumped in.

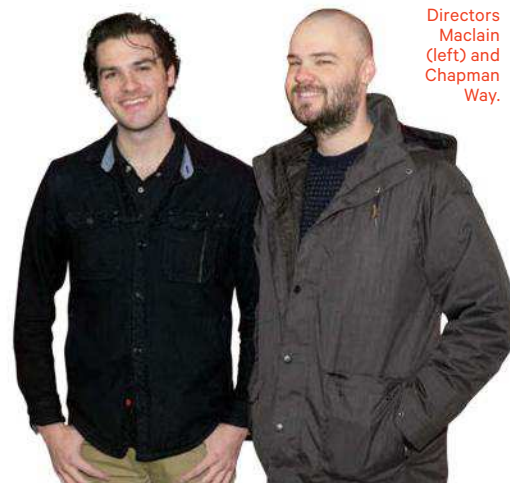
How did you persuade the former cult members to talk to you?

CHAPMAN The main pitch was, "We're giving you a platform to speak your truth. This isn't an interrogation, this isn't a gotcha interview, we're not out to humiliate anyone, no matter how bizarre your beliefs or ideologies may be — on both sides."

MACLAIN WAY I had gotten a sense that everyone felt like they had been represented in these one-dimensional caricatures. Even Antelopians felt they had always been talked about as these redneck bigots who are conservative townfolk that just didn't like the Rajneeshees because of their religion. And then these Sannyasins felt like they were represented as these brain-washed cult members.

Who did you try to get for the series who refused to be interviewed?

MACLAIN The one person that we really wanted was David Knapp, and his Sannyasin name was Swami Krishna Deva, the first major of Rajneeshpuram. He's the first Rajneeshee who flips and cooperates with Oregon and the federal government and spills the beans. We were really interested in hearing his perspective on the position that he was put in. But he just refused from day one to talk to us.



Directors
Maclain
(left) and
Chapman
Way.

What did you have to leave on the cutting-room floor that you wish you could have fit in?

CHAPMAN There was a section in episode six after the Bhagwan is taking his plea deal and has left the country, and immediately after that he tried to gain access to 27 other countries, which all denied him access. The United States government was calling other countries and putting pressure on them to not allow the Bhagwan into their country. It was a really fascinating archive sequence to see what a threat the government still felt he was and other countries felt he was. There's footage of the Greek government chasing him out of the country with police cars to the airport.

It's hard to ignore the parallels to what we're seeing in the current political landscape. How much of that plays into how timely the series is right now?

MACLAIN It was really bizarre when we were editing the series just to see how timely a lot of these topics were — with immigration bias, fear of the other, religious rights. We mapped out the entire show in 2014, when Obama was president, and it was a completely different political world we were living in. So it didn't really affect how we structured the story and what we wanted to talk about. I remember when Trump was throwing around the Muslim ban, and we had these horrible shootings and these conversations about the Second Amendment — and here was this pacifist spiritual group that armed themselves to protect themselves. It was really strange to see how timely it became.

Has there been interest in a fictionalized retelling?

CHAPMAN There has, yeah. There's been like a ton of producers and actors and people reaching out to us and the Duplasses. We don't want to be too involved in a fictional remake. If that happens, it's awesome because it's such an incredible story. But as far as Mac and I are concerned, we're just more excited to move on to our next documentary project. **THR**

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'And Then 9/11 Happened'

Hulu's limited series *The Looming Tower* centers on frustrated FBI agent John O'Neill (played by Jeff Daniels), whose fight against terrorism is thwarted by external and internal forces

BY JACKIE STRAUSE

John O'Neill's FBI farewell was held at Windows on the World, the top-floor venue in the World Trade Center's North Tower, in August 2001. He gave 25 years of service — many hunting Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, despite U.S. intel roadblocks and a contentious relationship with the CIA. The polarizing counterterrorism expert reluctantly left the bureau to start anew as head of security at a prior terror target, the Twin Towers. On Sept. 11, however, O'Neill would become one of the nearly 3,000 people who died in the attacks on the World Trade Center.

Sixteen years later, in August 2017, Hulu's *The Looming Tower* is re-creating O'Neill's (played by Jeff Daniels) party at The River Cafe in Brooklyn for the limited series' penultimate episode. The restaurant boasts a view of the lower Manhattan skyline through its panoramic window.

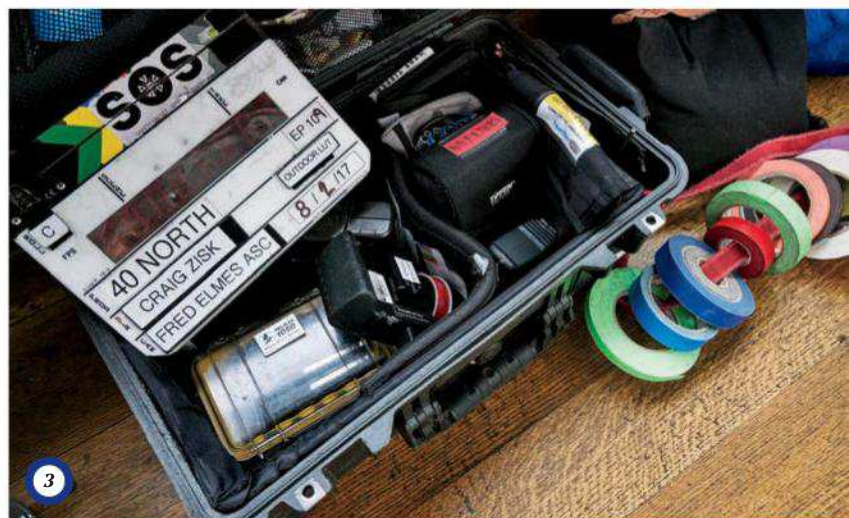
As O'Neill, Daniels films several sequences gazing out at where the towers once stood. "We have a photograph of John and one of his

girlfriends standing on the River Cafe dock with the bridge in the background," Lawrence Wright, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book on which the series is based, tells *THR* on set Aug. 2. "We didn't know that until they already picked the site, so there's a kind of ghostly presence that suggests maybe we picked the right spot."

The final episode, titled "9/11," would go on to chronicle the day of the attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. "Even though everyone watching knows what happens next, he doesn't," says Daniels, who researched his larger-than-life character by speaking to O'Neill's partners, including Ali Soufan. "The way he went about trying to get people to do what he wanted didn't work: He turned tables over, cleared desks, screamed at people. And I think by the time the FBI pushed him out, at that retirement party — which he didn't want — I just made the choice that the guy was going to start to refocus and maybe change. He was going to make the best of it, even though his true love was the FBI." **THR**



Photographed by Mackenzie Stroh



1 Bill Camp (right), who plays fictitious FBI agent Robert Chesney, says the weight of filming on location in New York was heavy: "Because I live here, it was always part of my hard-wiring in terms of where the story was coming from." **2** "The joy of playing O'Neill is that he doesn't know what's going to happen tomorrow," says Daniels (pictured with co-star Tahar Rahim). **3** "40 North" was the show's code name when filming. "We didn't want to attract attention as to what exactly we were doing," showrunner Dan Futterman explains. "We wanted people to react to the actual show and not to the idea of what we might or might not be filming." **4** Daniels (left), who plays a travel guitar between takes, with *Looming Tower* author and exec producer Lawrence Wright. **5** Says Daniels of Liz (played by Annie Parisse), one of O'Neill's several girlfriends: "I played that he was just going to start changing for the better in the third act of his life, and then 9/11 happened." **6** The penultimate episode was one of three directed by exec producer Craig Zisk (not pictured). Says Zisk: "We really dig into the emotions of how the towers affected these characters."





1 Minetta Tavern stood in for now-defunct NYC eatery Elaine's. The FBI gathering (pictured: agents played by Mark Hildreth, left, and Louis Cancelmi) appears in the ninth episode, "Tuesday." Says Zisk, "John was a regular at the real Elaine's." **2** O'Neill first brought protege Soufan (Rahim, right, with Ella Rae Peck) to his stomping ground in an earlier episode. "They run into a reporter that has been working on a bin Laden story and Ali sees that his boss is hero of the place," says Zisk. **3** Sullivan Jones, who plays SWAT Team member Floyd Bennet, playing the guitar like Daniels does during downtime. **4** O'Neill's wardrobe consists of crisp suits circa the late '90s. **5** First AD Joseph Reidy (left) and second AD Justin Bischoff on the set of episode six, "Boys at War." **6** The gathering was called so O'Neill's other girlfriend Sheri (played by Katie Finneran, pictured with Futterman) could meet his friends after moving to New York. **7** "Everybody sees how Jeff prepares and then it works its way down," says Zisk (not pictured) of his leading man. "Jeff, beyond his unbelievable talent, is a really nice guy and great to work with."



Memorable moments from a storied history

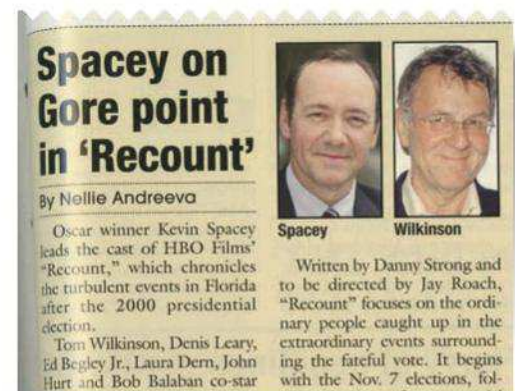
1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 **2008** 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018

In '08, Laura Dern Channeled Katherine Harris

Laura Dern, who stars in the HBO TV film *The Tale*, which made a #MeToo splash at Sundance, had a big year in the Emmy movie race in 2008. *Recount* won its category, and Dern received a nomination for supporting actress and won at the Golden Globes. The HBO drama focuses on the Florida recount after the 2000 presidential race between George W. Bush and Al Gore. Sydney Pollock had been set to direct, but illness forced him to drop out. The film premiered the day before he died from cancer May 26, 2008. "After Sydney, we went in a completely different direction with Jay Roach," says then-HBO Films president Colin Callender. "He comes from a more comedic background, and he brought a wryness and an irreverence to the screen." Dern plays Katherine Harris, Florida's secretary of state, who made many

of the ballot-counting decisions. Apart from her pro-Bush rulings, Harris is probably best remembered for her cosmetic choices, including berry-red lipstick, extensive layers of makeup and Tammy Faye Bakker-style eyelashes. On *Saturday Night Live*, she was devastatingly played by Ana Gasteyer. "With Katherine, we were trying to get beyond what had been almost a cartoonish public persona," says Roach. "When you cast a great actress like Laura, I think the audience gets the idea that you're really trying to understand the soul of the character." *Recount* shot on location in Florida, where it received a special state rebate for shooting during hurricane season. Roach says being in Florida was key to capturing the essence of the period between the election and the Supreme Court decision. "We were under a crazy time crunch and felt like we dropped

in — much like the candidates' legal staff did," he says. As for the film's effect on the election process, Roach is unsure. "Many of the people involved, like Brad Blakeman and Roger Stone, are still around," he says. "As a cautionary tale, I'm not sure it succeeded." — BILL HIGGINS



↑ Dern as Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris in 2008's *Recount*.

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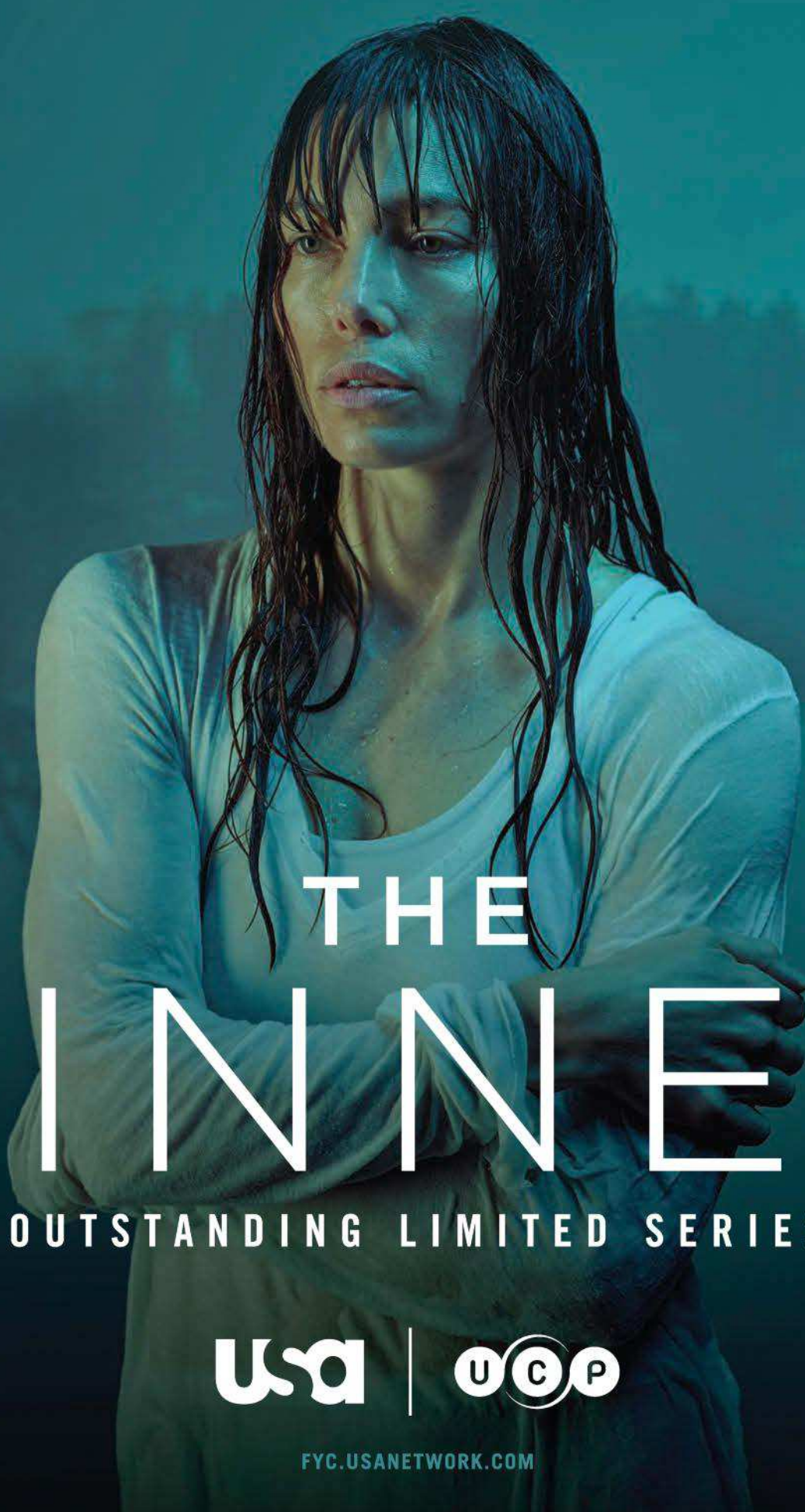
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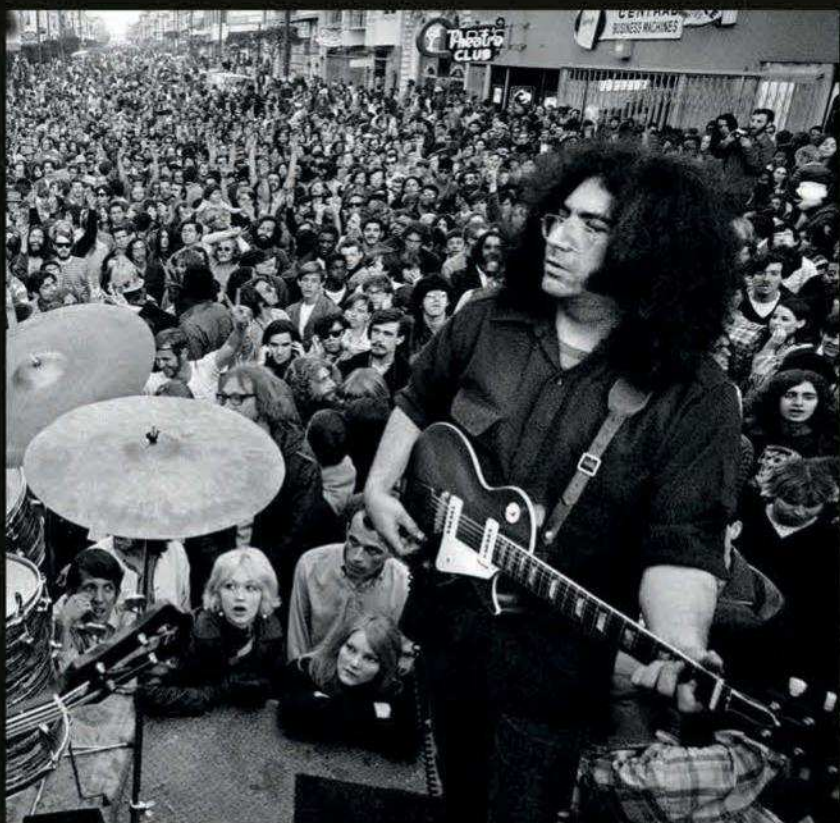
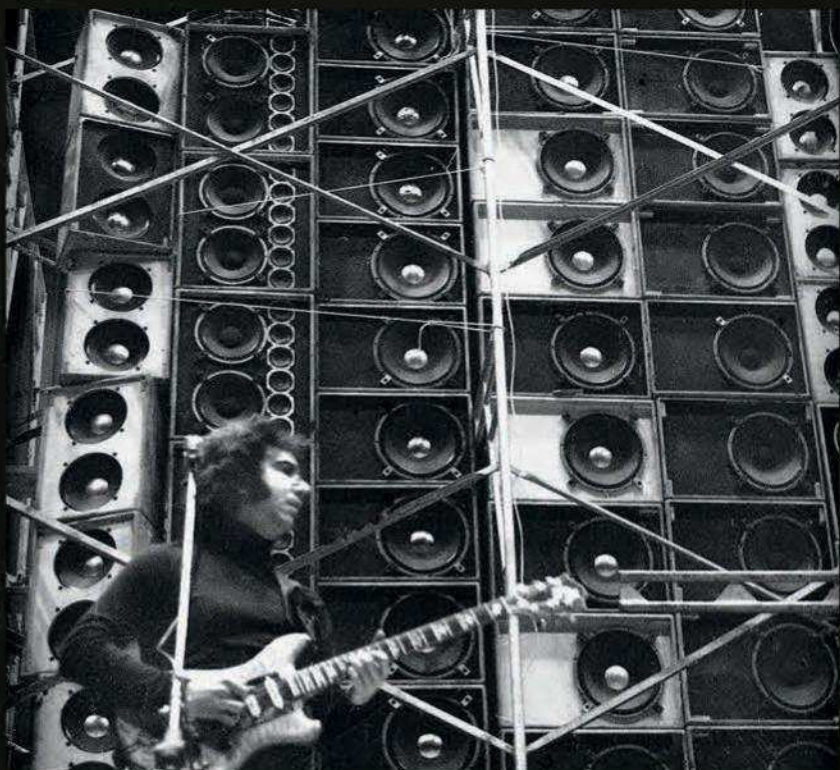


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