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May 26, 2021

THE *Hollywood* REPORTER

LIMITED SERIES

THE GOOD LORD BIRD

“MAGNIFICENTLY CRAFTED”

— TV GUIDE

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LIMITED SERIES

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“A POWERHOUSE CAST”

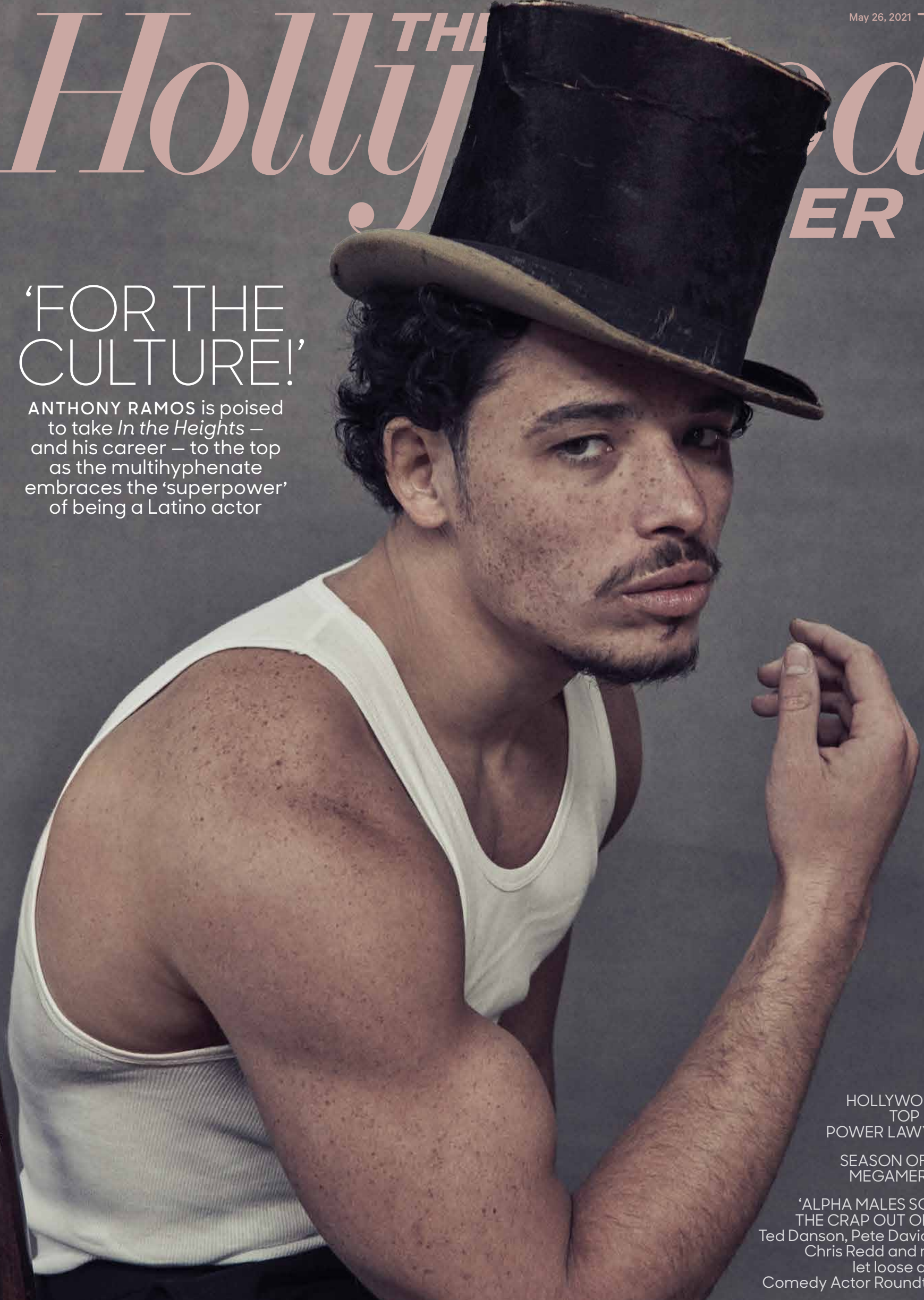
— THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

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ANTHONY RAMOS is poised to take *In the Heights* – and his career – to the top as the multihyphenate embraces the 'superpower' of being a Latino actor



HOLLYWOOD'S
TOP 100
POWER LAWYERS

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MEGAMERGER

'ALPHA MALES SCARE
THE CRAP OUT OF ME'
Ted Danson, Pete Davidson,
Chris Redd and more
let loose at the
Comedy Actor Roundtable

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"CHRIS ROCK IS WI
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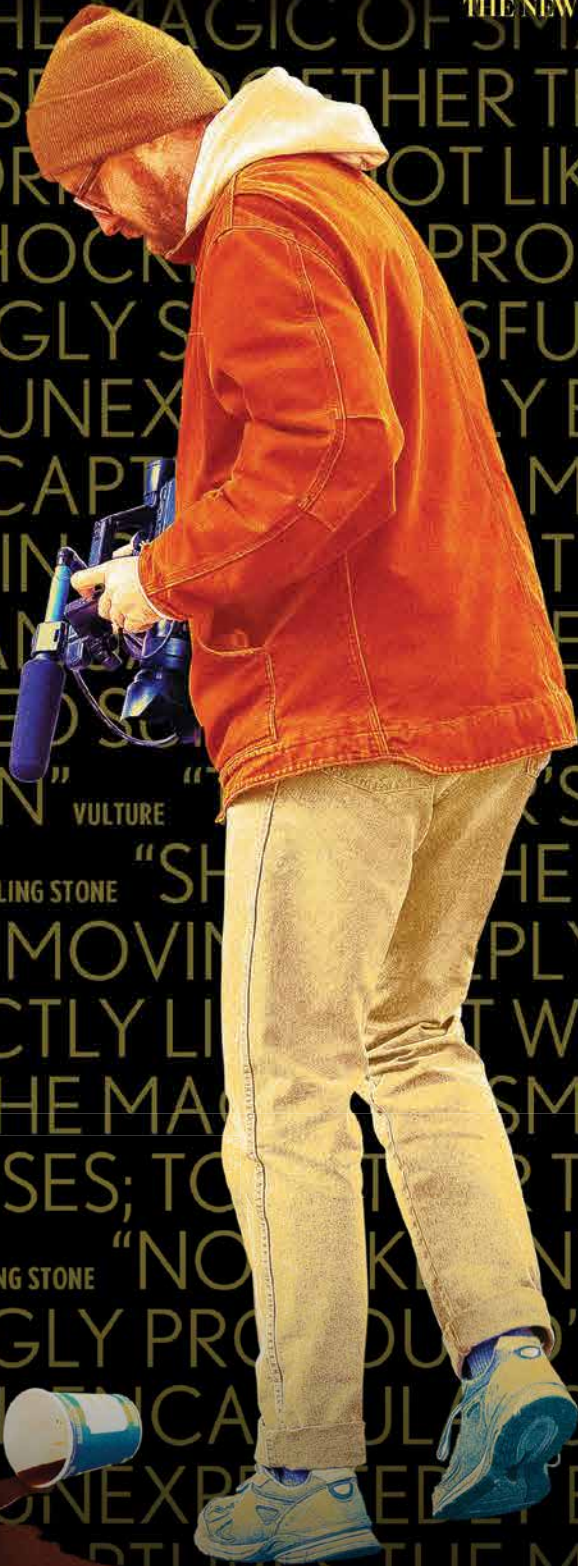
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“POIGNANT & HILARIOUS”

THE NEW YORK TIMES



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A stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.



"I know how it feels to be hungry for my dreams and also hungry like, 'I could use some McDonald's right now,'" says Anthony Ramos, who was photographed April 26 at Seret Studios in Brooklyn.

Hugo Boss shirt and pants, Jimmy Choo shoes.

Photographed here and for the cover by **Ruven Afanador**

On the cover: Calvin Klein tank, Gucci pants and shoes.

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54 **Anthony Ramos Makes Some Moves**

He can sing. He can dance. And now Hollywood is betting that he's got the star appeal to catapult Lin-Manuel Miranda's *In the Heights* into one of the first post-pandemic hits.

60 **'Alpha Males Scare the Crap Out of Me'**

On *THR*'s Comedy Actor Roundtable, Ted Danson, Pete Davidson,

Ed Helms, Lamorne Morris, Ben Platt and Chris Redd talk about balancing the desire to get serious with the impulse to play the hits: "Sometimes I just got a dick joke."

66 **Power Lawyers 2021**

When Hollywood gets disrupted, it's the lawyers who must set the new rules of the game. And if there's anyone who can negotiate tentpoles pivoting to streamers,

mediate the new détente between writers and agents and navigate the still insatiable appetite for content, it's the entertainment industry's top 100 attorneys — who may never go back to wearing suits and heels but definitely will return to The Grill on the Alley.

PLUS How gossip sites, aggregated news coverage and social media firestorms create headaches for those tasked with defending the accused,

and why inclusion still lags in Hollywood law, even as clients begin to demand diverse representation.

92 **Inching Closer Together: Navigating the First Post(ish)-Pandemic FYC**

The latest round of drive-in screenings for Emmy hopefuls sees talent breaking free of Zoom as awards strategists juggle the ease of virtual with the appeal of in-person.



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THE REPORT

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Will Discovery-WarnerMedia plan a super-service to tackle Netflix or a suite of brand offerings bundled together?

20 Could Blindsiding Talent Become the New Normal?

As WarnerMedia and ViacomCBS court Wall Street with lofty subscriber goals for their direct-to-consumer platforms, directors and stars can be caught off guard by film-to-streaming plans.

26 How Emmy Voters Can Prevent a Comedy Disaster

With hardly any 2020 nominees eligible and a lackluster pack of male-fronted projects (save *Ted Lasso*), getting it right depends on which worthy women can be recognized in a less-than-funny year.

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How the *Late Late Show With James Corden* exec producer juggled also producing the Grammys and directing *Friends: The Reunion*.

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The *Master of None* co-creator discusses a mostly Aziz-free season three, being a Hollywood go-to for AAPI matters, and helping David Chang win *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*.

46 TV Studio Chiefs Sound Off

Seven of the industry's top sellers perform an autopsy on broadcast's

big week and reveal what pitch they never want to hear again: "AOC in a malt shop, AOC in a school, AOC in a maternity ward!"

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51 2021 Power Watches

The latest status timepieces for men feature dials made with out-of-this-world meteorite, while the hottest women's watches eschew round cases for square, rectangular and tonneau shapes accented with diamonds.

53 Walton Goggins' Favorite Places to Eat Outside in L.A.

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96 Cruella

Emma Stone makes a vibrant villain-in-training in a fun, if frenzied, *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* origin story.

100 Oslo

Ruth Wilson and Andrew Scott star as married Norwegian diplomats who secretly organize peace talks between Israel and Palestine in this timely HBO film based on the Broadway play.

44 "Applying a personal story to a big canvas that's seen by a huge audience is appealing, but it's got to be the right thing," says *Master of None* co-creator Alan Yang. He was photographed May 13 at his home in New York City.

51 The automatic Parmigiani Fleurier Kalparisma Snow features an icy setting on both the white-gold case and dial, with 1,379 diamonds totaling 4.895 carats; price upon request, at Feldmar Watch Co., Los Angeles.

53 The sassy waitstaff at Bar Restaurant in Silver Lake are ready to serve.

Alan Yang photographed by **Daniel Dorsa**

“TIMELY & POETIC”



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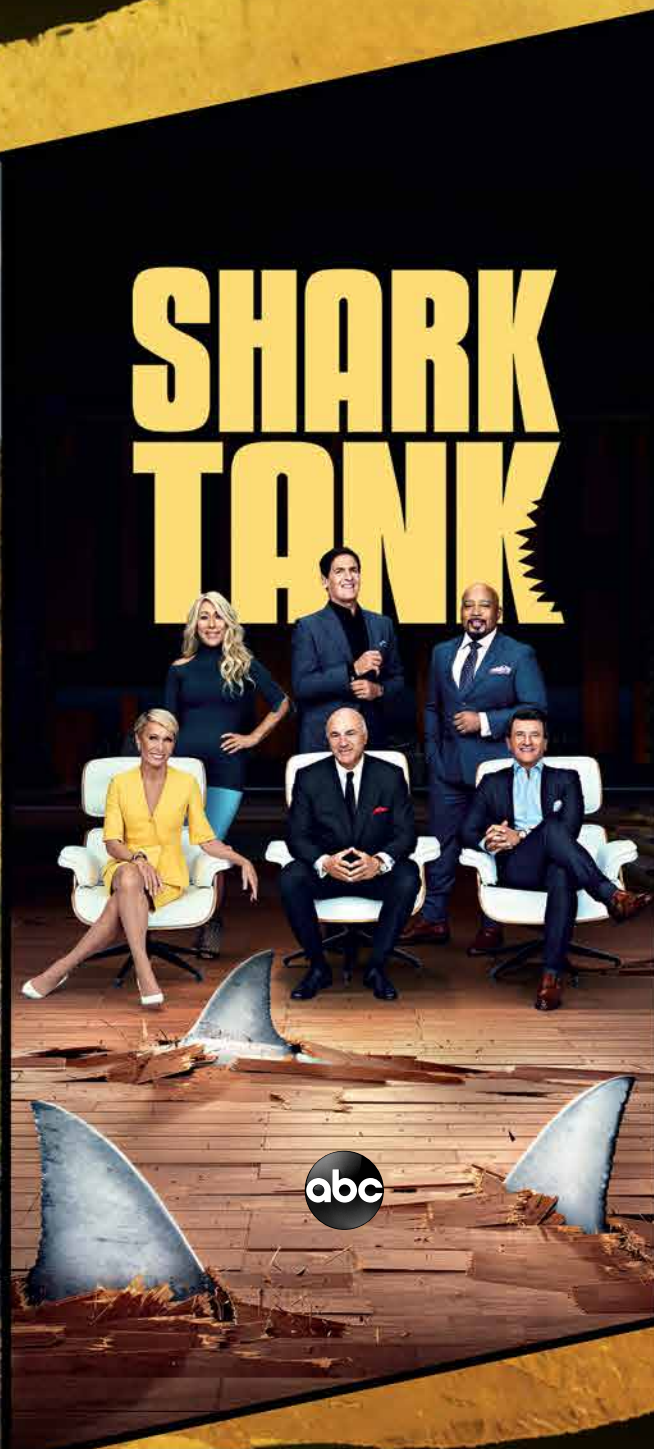
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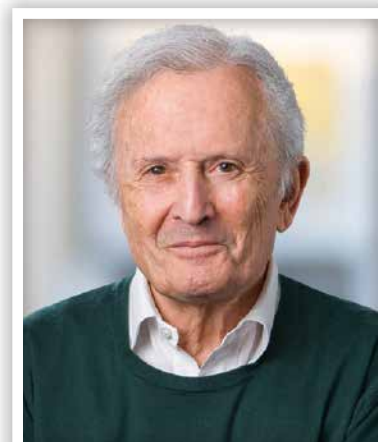
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↑ **Deals**
Talent Blindsided
Film-to-streaming moves surprise creators p. 20

Box Office
Summer 'Optimism'
More are comfortable returning to theaters p. 22

Heat Index



J. Cole
The rapper's *The Off-Season* hits No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart with 325 million-plus on-demand streams of the album's 12 tracks, per MRC Data.



Glenn Gordon Caron
After a workplace investigation on CBS drama series *Bull*, the showrunner is exiting and his overall deal at CBS Studios has ended.



Eric Heisserer
The showrunner's Netflix series *Shadow and Bone* debuts on Nielsen's streaming chart at No. 2 (behind *Falcon and the Winter Soldier*), with 721 million minutes viewed.



Martin Bashir
The BBC will review its editorial policies after a report found that the journalist used "deceitful" tactics to secure a landmark 1995 interview with Princess Diana.

Showbiz Stocks

↑ **\$57.28 (+9.5%)**
WWE (WWE)
The announcement that WWE would resume its live touring later this summer helped give the company's stock a jolt.

↓ **\$35.90 (-0.3%)**
FOX CORP. (FOX)
News that Fox would bring its Fox News primetime programming to its Fox Nation streaming service caused the company's share price to sink.

The Report

the Headlines



Can Discovery-WarnerMedia Get to '400 Million' Subscribers?

Will the marriage of HBO and Warner Bros. — with reality staples like HGTV and Food Network — result in a super-service to tackle Netflix — or individual offerings that could be bundled? **BY GEORG SZALAI**

One of the biggest streaming players said to me recently, 'If I had you, my churn would be zero,'” Discovery CEO **David Zaslav** told Wall Street on May 17 about streamer Discovery+'s ability to retain subscribers with popular reality shows like *90 Day Fiancé* and *Deadliest Catch*. Active Discovery+ users spend “over three hours with us” each day, the exec noted.

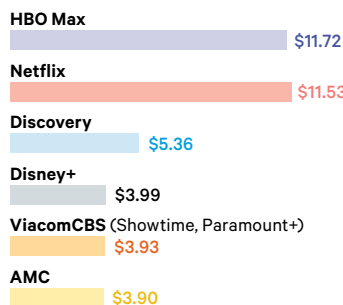
The planned \$43 billion merger with WarnerMedia — with its scripted TV crown jewel HBO and historic Warner Bros. film studio — will only further boost consumer appeal, Zaslav crowed: “You add to that Batman, Wonder Woman, King Kong, *Sex and the City*, *Friends*. It's an unrivaled combination.” Zaslav, who will lead the merged giant, told CNBC it could ultimately reach “two-, three-, 400 million homes” worldwide. So, how will Zaslav drive streaming growth to those

lofty, promised heights? Will the company take a page from the playbook of The Walt Disney Co., which is selling Disney+, ESPN+ and Hulu as differentiated products in the U.S., as well as in a discounted bundle? Or will Discovery-WarnerMedia combine its 200,000-hour trove

of content — from movies and series to sports and news — to create a super-service à la Netflix? The company, which is expecting to close the merger in mid-2022 pending U.S. regulatory approval, has a steep hill to climb. Netflix, which disclosed that it will spend \$17 billion on content alone in 2021 to keep bulking up its library, leads all streamers with north of 207 million global subscribers, while closest rival Amazon Prime disclosed that 175 million members streamed film and TV shows in 2020, and Disney+ amassed 103 million subscribers in less than two years thanks to the strength of its Marvel, *Star Wars*, Pixar and National Geographic brands. In contrast, WarnerMedia's HBO and HBO Max, combined, have 61 million global subscribers, as of the end of March, while Discovery Inc.'s streaming services, led by Discovery+ (which launched in

Average Revenue Per User

While Disney+ has amassed 103M subscribers since its November 2019 launch, it earns far less from its customers than Netflix



Sources: Company filings via Morgan Stanley research

May 19-25

The Report

Behind the Headlines

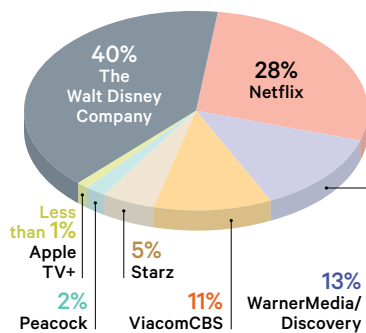
the U.S. on Jan. 4), have found 15 million subscribers. Zaslav and his team are keeping all options open. “We will have enormous flexibility in how we package our streaming services,” Zaslav told investors. “We will look at the range of options to unlock value.”

In Europe, where Discovery has sports rights deals, the company is offering soccer matches as part of Discovery+ subscriptions in some markets, while “in others, you get into Discovery+ for a cheaper price and then you buy” sports as an add-on, he told analysts. “Bundling has been a big advantage and provided growth and stickiness.”

Some on Wall Street took Zaslav’s early comments as a sign that a portfolio of services strategy — with different prices for different brand packages — was

If HBO Max and Discovery+ Merged Today ...

the combined offering would still face an uphill climb to gain subscriber market share



Source: Antenna, excludes Amazon Prime as well as free tiers, MVPD + telco distribution, select bundles and vMVPD add-ons.

also a likely approach for the U.S. “We’ll figure out exactly how to do it in each market, and we’ll probably experiment a lot,” Zaslav said.

Several finance analysts backed a bundling strategy in the U.S. “The market for streaming services has become especially crowded in the U.S.,” MoffettNathanson analyst

Michael Nathanson highlighted in a report. “In order to stand out, we have seen successful distribution strategies from Disney bundling Disney+, Hulu and ESPN+ together.”

Brendan Brady, a content strategy associate at analytics startup Antenna, notes that Disney has had success with investors by detailing subscriber gains of separate streaming products. “A positive consequence of the Disney bundle, for example, is that one bundle subscriber is considered a paid subscriber for each service included in the bundle — that helps with scale,” Brady notes.

It’s worth noting that a Disney+, Hulu (ad-supported) and ESPN bundle costs \$14 a month — a dollar less than the ad-free version of WarnerMedia’s HBO Max alone. Together, as of now, subscribing to an ad-free HBO Max and Discovery+ would cost \$22 in the U.S.

WarnerMedia, in a bid to appeal to consumers who find the \$15

monthly price point of HBO Max too costly, is launching a \$10 a month version, with ads, beginning in the first week of June. Discovery+ offers a \$5-a-month option with ads, an offering that Zaslav is bullish on. “We thought it was going to be mostly subscription” customers for Discovery+ but found the ad-supported product “had unbelievable average revenue per user,” Zaslav said. “We charge \$5, we make over \$6 [in advertising], and we’re making \$11 a subscriber, 50 percent more what we were making on a cable sub.”

CFRA Research analyst Tuna Amobi says he expects “some variation of a bundling strategy in the U.S.” from Discovery-WarnerMedia and suggests “an all-encompassing but customizable ‘house of brands’ streaming offering, which includes the best of Discovery+ and HBO Max at a discounted price that will be comparable to the rival offerings.” **VTR**

Sure, Warner-Discovery Will Reap \$3B in Cost Savings, but From Where?

The combined firm will likely see significant layoffs as leaders evaluate how big of a real estate footprint to keep

BY ALEX WEPRIN

The surprise May 17 reveal of WarnerMedia’s merger with Discovery Inc. was met by a mixture of excitement and trepidation by employees at both companies, sources at each say. There was excitement at the prospect of building a competitor to streaming juggernauts like Netflix, and trepidation over that dreaded term “synergies.”

The two companies say they expect \$3 billion in cost-saving synergies after two years and plan to pour that cash back into creating streaming content. But where will those savings come from?

The most obvious place is layoffs associated with the merger. The bright side: There is little to no overlap on the creative or content side of the businesses, as WarnerMedia offerings like HBO and Warner Bros. focus on more scripted content while Discovery has leaned into reality and unscripted fare. The bad news: Back office staff, from attorneys and accountants to HR, sales and IT, are likely to see cutbacks.

“While overlap in our creative and content capabilities is virtually nonexistent, there will be opportunity to redirect investment away from duplicative back-office, support and administrative functions into our growth strategies,” AT&T CEO John Stankey wrote in a May 17 memo to WarnerMedia staff. Discovery CEO David Zaslav told reporters during a Zoom press conference

the same day that “[On every part of the business other than content] we’re going to get really aggressive and drive productivity.”

Then there is what Discovery CFO Gunnar Wiedenfels told analysts, citing “optimization potential” from “systems integration” and “processes.” That means looking at everything from the payroll and benefits software to tech vendors to third-party marketing budgets. Combining the companies gives them a chance to reevaluate every deal with every vendor and service provider.

But there is also a third element still to be worked out: the combined company’s real estate footprint. The iconic Warner Bros. lot in Burbank won’t be going anywhere (Zaslav,

who recently bought the former Beverly Hills estate of producer Robert Evans, says he plans to maintain an office on the lot). But where does that leave the satellite offices in Nashville (where Scripps Networks had been based), or Silver Spring, Maryland (which had long been Discovery’s home)?

Perhaps the biggest question: Which New York City office will become the company’s world headquarters? Will it be WarnerMedia’s Hudson Yards offices, which sit in a gleaming 103-story tower that also houses an observation deck on the 100th floor? Or will it be Discovery’s more modest office, nestled between Union Square and Madison Square Park, in a 13-story building built in 1895?

If cost savings are key, one CNN source speculates that Zaslav and other top executives may stay put downtown in their more modest digs.

Regardless of where the headquarters is, the transition will still be a tough one, as executives noted in conversations with staff. “It was important that the table gets set to reorder the industry in a way that was to our respective advantages,” Stankey said of the merger in a Discovery town hall May 19. “Waiting longer would have meant that instead of getting to set the table, you probably would have been dealing with table scraps.”



WarnerMedia’s Hudson Yards offices in New York City.

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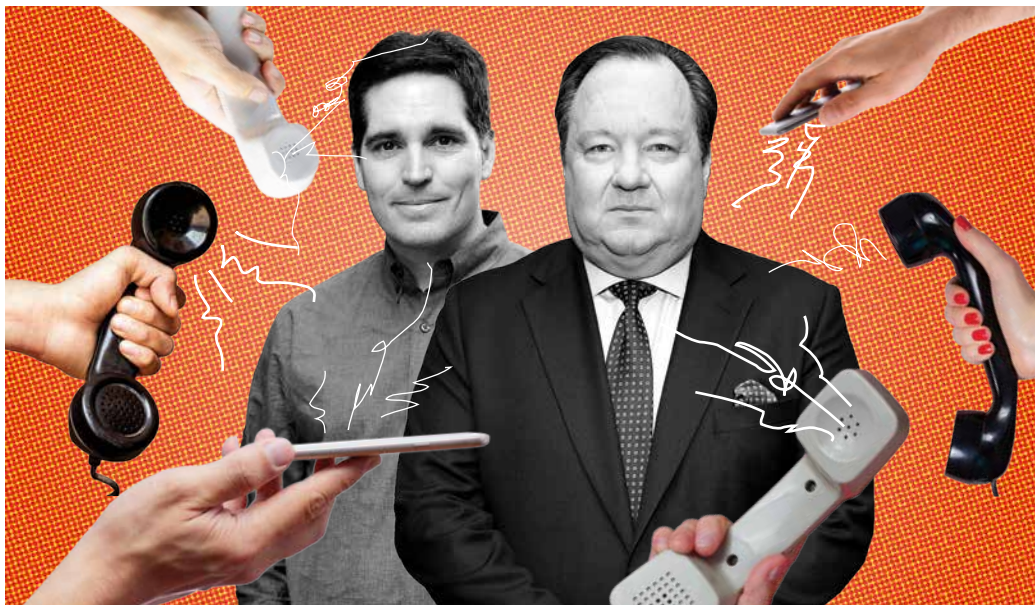
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Could Blindsiding Talent Become the New Normal?

As WarnerMedia and ViacomCBS court Wall Street with lofty subscriber goals for their direct-to-consumer platforms, directors and stars are often caught off guard

BY MIA GALUPPO AND BORYS KIT

When ViacomCBS chief **Bob Bakish** announced during an earnings call May 6 that the **Mark Wahlberg** movie *Infinite* would bypass theaters for a debut on the company's fledgling streamer Paramount+, the CEO said the film would "create a lot of noise." But the noise it created was the sound of angry phone calls.

Wahlberg, director **Antoine Fuqua** and producer **Lorenzo di Bonaventura** had no inkling an announcement was coming, sources tell *THR*. The movie's team was said to have received calls from Paramount brass the day before that outlined a move to streaming as a "possibility." One person close to the *Infinite* team noted: "It was not handled well."

This sequence of events should sound like déjà vu for many dealmakers in pandemic-era Hollywood. Universal caught talent off guard when the studio said in March 2020 that animated sequel *Trolls World Tour* would skip theaters and head straight to a premium video on demand debut priced at \$20. On a larger scale, talent was blindsided when WarnerMedia chief **Jason Kilar** said in December that Warner Bros.' entire 2021 theatrical slate was moving to a day-and-date release on HBO Max.

Earnings calls, streaming service launch presentations and press releases have become go-to venues for unveiling feature release plans, sometimes with A-list talent and their reps finding out at the same time as their potential audiences. Regardless of how stars learn of streaming releases, the new blueprint involves a round of talks between talent and studios to recoup lost box office bonuses,

as well as possible post-theatrical revenue streams. "There is no track record for what is going on right now," says one dealmaker.

After decades of box office-based feature deals with talent, the challenge facing reps is how to quantify a star's worth as it relates to bringing in streaming subscribers. "It's impossible for the studios, as they change windows and strategies, to be entirely consistent," says one studio insider. "It's going to feel arbitrary to certain people."

Contractually, talent typically has little leverage should a studio decide to put a title onto a streaming service, sources say. It did not readily occur to either agents or studios that contracts for projects releasing in 2021 — drawn two to three years ago, before some of the major services had launched — would have

WarnerMedia's Jason Kilar (left) told *The Wall Street Journal* that \$200 million was spent on talent over its day-and-date strategy. ViacomCBS' Bob Bakish's *Infinite* move surprised insiders.

to stipulate paydays should the film be moved from a planned theatrical release.

Shorter windows have proven to be one go-to solution. At February's Paramount+ showcase, it was announced that *A Quiet Place Part II* and the next *Mission: Impossible* installment would debut on streaming after a 45-day theatrical window. In May, Disney said **Ryan Reynolds'** *Free Guy* and Marvel film *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* would do the same, on Aug. 13 and Sept. 3, respectively. Insiders note that in the current theatrical climate, pandemic or not, 45 days is enough time to reach box office thresholds. (The first *Quiet Place* film grossed 93 percent of its total domestic box office, \$188 million, in its first 45 days of release.) Notes one rep who has clients in features headed to Paramount+ after the theatrical window: "After a month, who cares?"

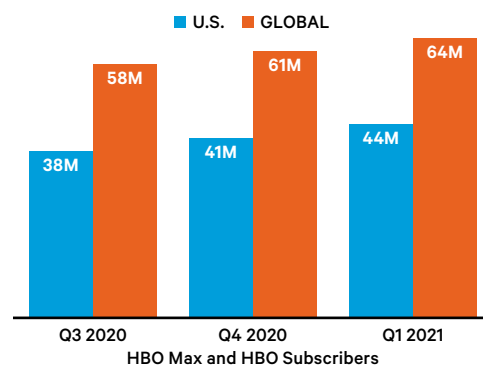
Meanwhile, Disney gave an early heads-up to talent when it moved its theme park-inspired movie *Jungle Cruise* to a day-and-date premium video on demand model on its service, Disney+, for July 30. Sources say that Disney began talks with stars **Dwayne Johnson** and **Emily Blunt** two to three weeks before the announcement. When it came time to unveil the news, it was made by Johnson on his social media channels, hours ahead of the company's May 13 earnings call.

The situation can become more complicated when the studio is selling to its own service. "If it's an unaffiliated service, you try getting a market value," says a dealmaker who works with A-listers in both the theatrical and streaming worlds. The pandemic has seen Paramount, Sony, Disney and Warners sell off titles to Netflix, Amazon and Apple. But, the rep notes, "when it comes to this situation" — a studio selling to its own streamer — "you know what they're willing to pay, but you don't know what the true value is. It's not being shopped around." Warner Bros., after revealing plans to send films to HBO Max, halved box office bonus thresholds for its 2021 slate, making it easier for talent to reach backend targets.

The worry now among creatives is that leadership is not as attentive to the world of talent relations. The \$43 billion plan to merge WarnerMedia and Discovery Inc., to be led by Discovery chief **David Zaslav**, is just the latest deal rattling the industry. (Zaslav, in an effort to reassure Hollywood, has said his "No. 1 priority" will be building "relationships with the creative community.") Adds one rep, "If you're going to be making movies, you need big stars and big directors and you need to communicate effectively." **THR**

How Warner's Day-and-Date Bet Is Going So Far

As Warner Bros. sends its 2021 film slate direct to HBO Max to help boost streaming subscribers, its services gained 2.7 million subs domestically in Q1



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Summer Box Office: Studios ‘Optimistic,’ Though ‘Only Time Will Tell’

Polling indicates that consumers are more and more comfortable returning to theaters even as studios hedge their bets by releasing such tentpoles as *Black Widow* and *Boss Baby: Family Business* day-and-date **BY PAMELA MCCLINTOCK**

On May 19 at the AMC Century City multiplex in Los Angeles, **Arnold Schwarzenegger** took to the stage with his usual bravado to promote the theatrical experience. “Now is the time to wind down the pandemic period and get back to the big screen,” he said before asking the audience — mostly entertainment press — to chant, “we’re back, we’re back.”

After months of cinema closures and sending high-profile content directly to homes, Hollywood is jumping back into the box office trenches and supplying a steady stream of big movies. In the U.S., the campaign begins Memorial Day weekend with Disney’s *Cruella* and Paramount’s *A Quiet Place Part II*.

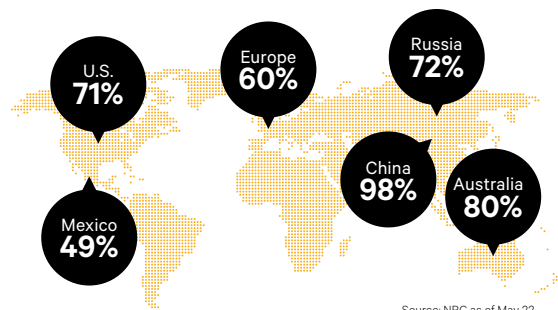
There are good, as well as ominous, signs.

As the pandemic eases in many parts of the globe, the number of people who feel comfortable returning to the movies is growing dramatically, according to leading research firm National Research Group. In China, the comfort level is 98 percent, helping to explain why Universal’s latest *Fast & Furious* installment opened to an impressive \$136 million there during the May 21-23 weekend, the second-biggest bow of any title in the series (only the previous film in 2017 brought in more). *F9* opened in seven other foreign markets ahead of its June 25 U.S. bow, earning an impressive \$163 million all in.

“I can’t be anything but cautiously optimistic,” says Paramount domestic distribution chief **Chris Aronson** as he prepares to release *Quiet Place Part II*. At the same time, the executive is among many in Hollywood who are pondering the pandemic’s long-term impact on moviegoing: “We

Comfort Level With Returning to Theaters

China’s box office has bounced back, but it’s been a slower recovery in Europe and the U.S.



From left: *In the Heights*, *Black Widow*, *Cruella*, *F9* and *A Quiet Place Part II* are headed to theaters.

simply don’t know yet. Only time will tell.”

As part of the mad dash to catch up with the likes of Amazon Prime and Netflix, WarnerMedia and Disney furiously tried to grow HBO Max and Disney+ during the COVID-19 crisis by offering day-and-date releases. And, in a surprise turn, Universal said May 24 that it will launch the sequel *The Boss Baby: Family Business* simultaneously on sister streaming service Peacock as well as in theaters on July 2.

So far, ViacomCBS says Paramount event pics, including *Quiet Place Part II*, won’t debut on Paramount+ until 45 days after their theatrical release. And Disney CEO **Bob Chapek**, in explaining his studio’s hedged bet on movie theaters in 2021, told investors May 24: “We didn’t want to delay *Black Widow* again, but we couldn’t put all our eggs in the theatrical distribution basket.” That Marvel film hits theaters July 8 and will be made available to Disney+ subscribers the same day for a Premier Access charge of \$30.

Post-pandemic, all the major studios — including Disney — have indicated they will adhere to a 45-day window for major releases per new dynamic windowing deals with theater owners. (That’s half the traditional 90-day frame.) Studios have tried for years to collapse the window, considering that more than 95 percent of ticket sales occur within

the first 45 days of a film’s big-screen release.

The May 19 gathering at AMC Century City gave studios a chance to present their summer slates in full form, much as they do at CinemaCon, the annual gathering of theater owners and media that was scrapped in 2020. It was sponsored by a Big Screen Is Back consortium made up of marketing executives,

the National Association of Theatre Owners and the Motion Picture Association.



Aronson



Colligan

NRG’s **Ethan Titelman** and **Matt Blong** have been polling moviegoers around the world since the pandemic began. At the lowest point, in early January, the comfort level among U.S. consumers was 42 percent, according to Titelman. Now, it has jumped

to 71 percent and is expected to reach 80 percent or more by the time *In the Heights* and *F9* open domestically in June. Another bright note for the box office: NRG has found in recent weeks that consumers trust movie theaters more than indoor restaurants.

Imax Entertainment president **Megan Colligan** predicts a surge in filmgoing as restrictions ease. “Interest in movies will be higher than it was pre-pandemic,” she says. “It will be like the Roaring ’20s. The NRG numbers are very real, and the films that hit the zeitgeist in the right space are really going to be massive benefactors.” **VH1**

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The Al-Jalaa Tower in Gaza City, a building that had hosted the offices of the Associated Press news agency.

Hollywood Sentiment Shifts on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Some stars are more willing to take a pro-Palestinian stand on social media, while other industry notables are privately saying ‘the situation is just too intense for me to speak up at the moment’ BY TATIANA SIEGEL

In July 2014, **Javier Bardem** and **Penélope Cruz** signed an open letter accusing Israel of “genocide” against the Palestinians during the Gaza War. Days later, the married A-listers walked back their sentiments, with the *No Country for Old Men* actor apologizing for both as they faced a Hollywood backlash. “My signature was solely meant as a plea for peace,” Bardem stated at the time.

Fast-forward seven years, and the headlines out of the fraught region are similar, with hundreds dead, mostly Palestinians. Unlike with past hostilities in the region, this year’s conflict exposed a fissure thousands of miles away in Hollywood, where public support for Israel is shifting and a counter viewpoint is increasingly finding traction, with notables from **Viola Davis** to **Michael B. Jordan** to **Zayn Malik** using their social media platforms to show solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Yet others, like Hollywood mogul **Haim Saban**, a Democratic Party megadonor who was born in Egypt and grew up in Israel, are criticizing those who, he claims, “have zero understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict” amid the showbiz sentiment shift. “Misinformation spreads like wildfire in our digital era, and unfortunately blatantly distorted, one-sided memes, posts and images paint a completely false picture of the situation in Israel and Gaza,” Saban says to *THR*. “Whether in Hollywood or elsewhere, uninformed influencers should refrain from

posting inflammatory information about issues they don’t understand.” Hollywood lawyer **Marty Singer** says he’s found it more difficult to enlist stars to attend events that benefit Israeli causes, even if they privately support any given effort, over fear “they’ll be attacked” online for the sentiment.

As a result of shifting allegiances, Creative Community for Peace director **Ari Ingel** has found mounting resistance when attempting to corral members of the Hollywood community to back initiatives from the nonprofit, which opposes the cultural boycott of Israel. Though Ingel wrangled 130 prominent industryites including **Diane Warren** and **Sherry Lansing** to sign a May 14 joint statement that urges “our colleagues and friends in the entertainment community to stop posting misinformation and one-sided narratives that only work to inflame the conflict instead of bringing about peace,” he said many opted not to get involved. “People who support Israel and their right to defend

itself said to me, ‘The situation is just too intense for me to speak up at the moment,’” Ingel notes. He says a factor for the change of sentiment in recent years is the Black Lives Matter leadership’s embrace of the Palestinian cause.

Melina Abdullah, co-founder of the Los Angeles chapter of Black Lives Matter, credits the social justice movement with bringing awareness in the industry to the Palestinians. “I think there’s an overall consciousness-raising in Hollywood that is helped along by Black Lives Matter,” Abdullah says. “And that means recognizing the plight of oppressed people. And when we think about what’s happening to the Palestinians, there are many folks, including in Hollywood, who feel like they can’t just sit back and allow that to happen without saying something,” Abdullah adds that friends like actor **Kendrick Sampson**, who spearheaded last summer’s BLM protests in Hollywood, have faced “pushback for [their] support of the Palestinian people. ... It’s not that everybody all of a sudden is saying, ‘OK, the violence meted out against Palestinians is unjust.’ There is still some support for the state of Israel. I think it’s not a done deal at this point. When people say that we need to unwaveringly support the state of Israel, I think that part is over, that there’s at least some pushback on

that notion that there needs to be unwavering support for Israel. But there is still a challenge that those who want to stand with the Palestinian people face both inside and outside Hollywood.”

Online pushback has been aimed at those posting middle-of-the-road views. **Gal Gadot** and **Rihanna** were criticized for noting suffering on both sides. The



Abdullah



Singer

Wonder Woman star and Israel Defense Forces veteran disabled comments on an Instagram post that said, “Israel deserves to live as a free and safe nation. Our neighbors deserve the same.” In 2019, **Demi Lovato** was criticized after posting about a “magical” trip to Israel. (Lovato apologized: “I’m sorry if I’ve hurt or offended anyone.”) Meanwhile, on May 24, actor **Mark Ruffalo**, who had been weighing in on the issue during the conflict, noted on Twitter: “I have reflected & wanted to apologize for posts during the recent Israel/Hamas fighting that suggested Israel is committing ‘genocide’. It’s not accurate, it’s inflammatory, disrespectful & is being used to justify antisemitism here & abroad. Now is the time to avoid hyperbole.” **THR**



The Gaza Strip just before the cease-fire began May 21.

GAZA: MAHMUD HAMS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; (2) SABAN: AXELLE/BAUER-GRIFFIN/FILMAGIC; ABDULLAH: GREG DOHERTY/GETTY IMAGES; SINGER: AMY SUSSMAN/GETTY IMAGES FOR THR

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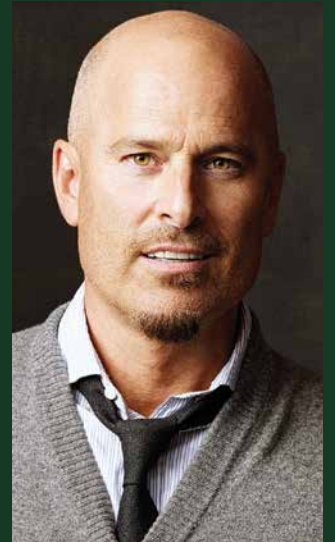
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Actresses to watch include (from left) Jean Smart (*Hacks*), Kaley Cuoco (*The Flight Attendant*), Anna Konkle and Maya Erskine (*PEN15*), and Renée Elise Goldsberry (*Girls5eva*).

The Report | THE RACE

HOW EMMY VOTERS CAN PREVENT A COMEDY DISASTER

With hardly any 2020 nominees and lackluster male-fronted projects (save *Ted Lasso*), getting it right depends on which worthy women can be recognized in a less-than-funny year

BY DANIEL FIENBERG

The 2021 Emmys were always going to be an exercise in anarchy. Between an eligibility window marred by COVID-impacted disappearances — count *Atlanta*, *Succession*, *Euphoria*, *Ozark* and *Better Call Saul* among shows taking the year off — and the conclusion of other favorites, there won't be a single acting or series winner available to repeat in the drama, comedy or limited fields.

On the comedy side, that vacuum was largely caused by the end of *Schitt's Creek*, which celebrated an unprecedented sweep last fall. But that's only a start. For various reasons, the only 2020 comedy series nominee to even air in this Emmy period was *The Kominsky Method*. No enthusiasm was curbed, no things were done in the shadows, and Mrs. Maisel got no opportunity to be marvelous.

This presents an opportunity — an opportunity for disaster. Emmy voters have the very real chance to either infuse an already moribund category with

intriguing, edgy new life or reduce an entire Emmy field to obsolescence.

Maybe, if we're being completely honest, the latter sort of slash-and-burn approach is necessary anyway. It seems close to inevitable that the cast of *Saturday Night Live* could land as many as a half-dozen actors in a supporting field in which they clearly shouldn't be eligible, and maybe what it will take to instigate some sort of new "best performance in a variety or sketch series" category would be shutting out dozens of supporting actors from worthy shows.

Some consideration also needs to be given to the proliferation of limited series and what it means that two of the best half-hour shows in the eligibility field — *I May Destroy You* and *WandaVision* — are "limited series" and not "comedies," despite not being inherently close-ended stories. Granted, neither show would clearly be a comedy anyway. Then again, neither is *The Flight Attendant*, but the HBO Max series has such a funny beginning and star **Kaley Cuoco** is so versatile

that we're willing to ignore that it's a dark alcoholic murder mystery by the end.

For months, the Emmy race for comedy series appeared to be boiling down to *Ted Lasso* and ... well, that's it. *Ted Lasso*. The heartwarming Apple TV+ series and uplifting meme generator has been treated as such a foregone conclusion that it's almost like nobody else needs to show up. I don't fully object, but I hope the *Lasso* love extends to the farthest reaches of the terrific ensemble — not just **Jason Sudeikis** and **Hannah Waddingham**, but **Juno Temple**, **Brett Goldstein**, **Brendan Hunt** and **Nick Mohammed**.

Recent arrivals like HBO Max's *Hacks* and Netflix's *Master of None* — talk about a show that has been completely miscategorized for a third season that's wholly dramatic — might help provide options, but Emmy voters may need to dig deeper to find even a modicum more of relevance.

What shows would this critic suggest voters check out to avoid resorting to something like *Young Rock* just because it would be nice to see Regular-Age Rock on the red

carpet? I'd start with Hulu's *PEN15*, which launched as a show with a gimmick — 30-something stars masquerading as teens, but not in a creepy *Dear Evan Hansen* way — but has become one of the most perceptive, painful and funny explorations of adolescence to grace the screen. NBC's *Superstore* didn't have its best year, but who among us did? The smart working-class sitcom handled COVID-19 well, and this is the last chance to recognize it. Apple TV+'s *Dickinson* became wilder and more consistent in its second season, Peacock's *Girls5eva* delivered actual and frequent laughs. And yes, *Hacks* is quite good, gets better with each episode and should be saluted for more than just **Jean Smart**.

By all means, though, salute Jean Smart. It just happens that if any category has potential to overflow, it's comedy actress — where once again I'd say any field should start with *PEN15* stars **Maya Erskine** and **Anna Konkle**, both so vulnerable and so perfectly ridiculous. Emmy voters missed out on **Jane Levy** last year, but the *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist* star remains impeccably joyful and fragile in her NBC bubble show, which could really use the boost — so don't forget about co-stars **Alex Newell** and **John Clarence Stewart**. Speaking of forgetting, Emmy voters have a tendency to nominate **Cristin Milioti**'s male co-stars but not her, yet it should be obvious how integral she is to the deadpan absurdity of HBO Max's *Made for Love*.

All that is without getting to a never-better **Alia Shawkat** in HBO Max's *Search Party*, *Girls5eva* standout **Renée Elise Goldsberry**, super-likable first-timer **Jana Schmieding** of *Rutherford Falls* or **Charlotte Nicdao**, the heart and soul of *Mythic Quest* on Apple TV+.

There are so many tremendous comic actresses out there that my next proposal is to just give *Ted Lasso* star Sudeikis his Emmy now and expand the actress nominees to 15. Sudeikis can't be beaten. That actor field is so weak, it may be time to start asking: *Can men actually be funny?* But that's a different column. **THR**

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'IP IS THE NEW PRIMETIME': TV'S UPFRONTS PITCH TO ADVERTISERS

Deal of the Week

It wasn't all that long ago that the finale of every upfront presentation was the reveal of the network primetime schedule. What show would get the coveted post-*Friends* time slot on NBC? Would CBS create a new night of drama series?

Those schedule reveals aren't gone quite yet, but just as the pandemic scrambled the TV development process and forced ad sales meetings to move to Zoom, this year's upfronts deemphasized broadcast primetime while building up streaming. Or, as WarnerMedia head of ad sales **JP Colaco** said during the upfront, "We believe IP is the new primetime." The pitch: Yes, broadcast TV is on the decline, but streaming makes up for it. NBCUniversal touted Peacock, Fox pitched Tubi, WarnerMedia debuted HBO Max With Ads, ViacomCBS highlighted Paramount+ and Pluto, Discovery brought out Discovery+, and Disney featured Hulu.

"This is the year that people are looking for that incremental reach that digital can provide, a year in which it isn't a 'nice-to-have' with digital but a must-have with the linear ratings declining this past year," ViacomCBS president and chief ad sales revenue officer **Jo Ann Ross** tells *THR*. "I'm not

putting linear to bed — linear still has the broadest reach in terms of what we have it offer in broadcast and cable, but when we sit with clients and show them what the incremental reach can be when we shift some of that linear spending to digital, it makes for a great story."

It helps that the digital platforms offer more advanced ad opportunities than linear, with more precise targeting and interactive and less intrusive creative. Executives at NBCU and WarnerMedia said that Peacock and HBO Max With Ads will have the lightest ad load among streamers on the market (Peacock is committed to "no more than five minutes of ads" per hour, with no specifics on HBO Max yet), and all the companies touted their proprietary data and targeting capabilities as well as options like home screen takeovers and "pause" ads that appear when a viewer pauses a show.

Meanwhile, Disney has leaned into its first-mover advantage — not from Disney+, which doesn't include ads for now, but rather from Hulu. "We've become the leader in streaming TV advertising, reaching more households than all other AVOD [ad-supported] connected TV services combined," said Disney president of ad sales and partnerships, **Rita Ferro**, during the company's virtual presentation.

It was, to a certain extent, the Netflix effect. Even though streaming's 800-pound gorilla doesn't run traditional ads (there are some product integrations), the legacy TV networks leaned into the idea that they aren't in the broadcast business so much as they are in the digital business, competing with giants like Google, Netflix and Amazon. So when NBCU chairman of global advertising partnerships **Linda Yaccarino** explained "our company's vision" at its upfront, the pitch wasn't a new comedy block on Thursdays; it was "the metrics and mechanics that set us apart from every other media company, and the magic that makes us a new kind of tech company." — ALEX WEPRIN

From left: Disney's Rita Ferro, NBCU's Linda Yaccarino and ViacomCBS' Jo Ann Ross led ad sales pitches during upfronts.



Kumail Nanjiani

FILM

Mark Ruffalo (UTA, Lighthouse, KLVB) has joined Emma Stone and Willem Dafoe in Yorgos Lanthimos' *Poor Things* for Searchlight Pictures.

Henry Cavill (WME, Garcia) is in talks to star in Chad Stahelski's long-gestating *Highlander* reboot for Lionsgate.

Julia Louis-Dreyfus (CAA) will star in the A24 feature *Tuesday*, with Irish actress Lola Petticrew playing her daughter.

Eric Roth (CAA, Lenore, Jackoway Austen) will write a Cher biopic for Universal, produced by *Mamma Mia!*'s Judy Craymer and Gary Goetzman.

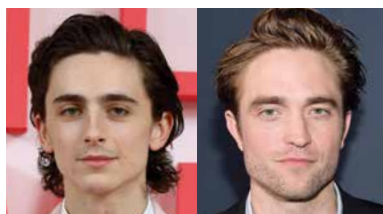
Dwayne Johnson (WME, Garcia, Gang Tyre) will voice star in DC's animated feature

Warner Bros. Bets on Next Franchise Stars

Big Deal

Warners Bros. is hitching its wagons to a new generation of talent to carry it to the future. On May 21, the studio closed a deal for

Timothée Chalamet to star in *Wonka*, a musical reimagining of the infamous chocolatier from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, which the studio is hoping will prove to be a multi-movie franchise. The same day, the studio unveiled an overall first-look producing deal across many divisions with **Robert Pattinson**, star of *The Batman*, its upcoming relaunch of the storied DC hero and perhaps the most important brand for the studio. (Chalamet is repped by UTA and Ginsburg Daniels;



Timothée Chalamet (left) and Robert Pattinson.

Pattinson is repped by WME, Curtis Brown and 3 Arts Entertainment.)

While both actors are stars — and Chalamet is toplining Legendary's *Dune* tentpole in October — they have spent the majority of their recent years in the world of indie auteurs. But insiders say that Warners,

historically the most star-oriented studio, is looking to forge deals with talent who could carry successful movie franchises.

One rep says the studio is aiming to build ties with those names who can both headline films and cut producer deals. With Warners president of production **Courtenay Valenti** leading the way, the studio is scooping up those they see as having long-term potential and investing in them. **Margot Robbie** and her LuckyChap Entertainment already call the studio home, and Warners, via its various divisions, has a rich deal with producer **J.J. Abrams** to carry franchise and branded entertainment. Says one rival exec, "They are curating a stable of hitters." — BORYS KIT

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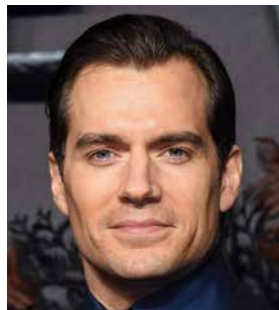
\$130M

Big Number

Snapchat's payments to 5,400 creators since launching TikTok competitor Spotlight in November, the company disclosed May 20.



Ramirez



Daniels



DiCaprio bought the property from Ferguson, who paid \$4.6 million in 2013.

League of Super-Pets as Krypto the Super-Dog.

Bad Boys for Life's **Adil El Arbi** and **Bilall Fallah** (CAA, **Management 360**, **Jackoway Austen**) will direct Warner Bros.' *Batgirl* feature.

Godzilla vs. Kong's **Adam Wingard** (CAA, **Grandview**, **Morris Yorn**) will direct Universal's *Hardcore*, based on the comic from *The Walking Dead* creator Robert Kirkman and Marc Silvestri.

John Boyega (the U.K.'s **Identity**, **Sloane Offer**) will reunite with filmmaker Joe Cornish for a sequel to the cult classic *Attack the Block*.

TELEVISION

Ryan Reynolds (WME, **Sloane Offer**) and **Rob McElhenney** (WME, **3 Arts**, **Sloane Offer**) will star in and executive produce the FX docuseries *Welcome to Wrexham*, following the two stars' purchase of a struggling Welsh soccer club.

Lee Daniels (CAA, **Hansen Jacobson**) has renewed his overall deal with Disney's 20th Television.

Kaley Cuoco (SDB, **Brillstein**, **Hansen Jacobson**) and her Yes, Norman Productions have signed a new multiyear overall deal with Warner Bros. TV.

Jeremy Allen White (WME, **Management 360**, **Hansen Jacobson**) will topline FX's restaurant comedy pilot *The Bear*.

Singer **Jeremih**, aka **Jeremy P. Felton** (**First Access**), has joined Starz's *Power Book IV: Force*.

Keeley Hawes (the U.K.'s **B-Side**, **Link**) is developing an untitled drama series about the 1999 London nail bombings.

HBO has renewed *A Black Lady Sketch Show* for a third season. ... **TBS** has renewed *Chad* for a second season. ... **Fox** has renewed *911* for a fifth season, *The Resident* for a fifth season,

911: Lone Star for a third season and *The Great North* for a third season.

DIGITAL

Kumail Nanjiani (UTA, **Mosaic**, **Schreck Rose**) will play Somen "Steve" Banerjee, founder of the Chippendales male striptease show, in the Hulu series *Immigrant*.

Leslie Odom Jr. (CAA, **Untitled**, **Jackoway Austen**) and **Kate Hudson** (CAA, **Untitled**, **Jackoway Austen**) have joined Rian Johnson's *Knives Out* sequel at Netflix.

Issa Rae (UTA, **3 Arts**, **Hansen Jacobson**) will produce and serve as mentor for filmmaking competition and docuseries *Project Greenlight*, which is returning as an HBO Max series.

Jenna Ortega (CAA, **Gilbertson**, **Jackoway Austen**) will star as Wednesday Addams in Netflix's *Addams Family* offshoot drama series *Wednesday*, directed by Tim Burton.

Sara Ramirez (**Untitled**, **Schreck Rose**) has joined HBO Max's *Sex and the City* revival *And Just Like That ...* as the franchise's first non-binary character.

The Proposal's **Anne Fletcher** (UTA, **Sloane Offer**) will direct a *Hocus Pocus* sequel for Disney+, with **Bette Midler**, **Sarah Jessica Parker** and **Kathy Najimy** returning.

Kevin James (UTA, **Jeff Sussman**, **Schreck Rose**), **Taylor Lautner** (UTA, **Untitled**, **Hansen Jacobson**) and **Rob Schneider** (ICM, **Brillstein**) will star in the Netflix football comedy *Home Team*, inspired by the life of New Orleans Saints coach Sean Payton.

Jeremy Irvine (UTA, the U.K.'s **Independent**) is in talks to play gay comic book hero Alan Scott in the HBO Max series *Green Lantern*.

Rebecca Ferguson (ICM, the U.K.'s **Tavistock Wood**) will star in *Wool*, an Apple TV+ drama series based on Hugh Howey's best-selling book trilogy.

The Vampire Diaries' **Julie Plec** (**Management 360**, **Felker**)

Rep Sheet



Hans Zimmer, the Oscar-winning composer whose upcoming films include *Dune* and *No Time to Die*, signed with CAA.

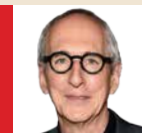
Shea Couleé, a finalist on VH1's *RuPaul's Drag Race*, signed with UTA.

Phil Dunster, who appears on Apple TV+'s *Ted Lasso*, signed with **Authentic**.

Trevor George Smith Jr., aka rapper **Busta Rhymes**, left APA for CAA.

Alok Vaid-Menon, an author, performer and public speaker, signed with UTA.

THR, Esq.



CASE Michael Shamberg v. AMPAS

WHY IT MATTERS

The *Contagion* producer and AMPAS (but not board) member will move forward in a lawsuit alleging the Academy must vote on his proposal for "state of the art social media" — i.e., improve its official Twitter and Facebook feed — and "an annual member survey." While the Academy argues its bylaws require no such vote, a Los Angeles judge has ruled that such a conclusion would be premature.

Toczek is adapting **Richelle Mead's** YA book series *Vampire Academy* as a scripted live-action drama for Peacock.

HBO Max is developing a Harry Potter quiz show and retrospective special timed to the 20th anniversary of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

REAL ESTATE

Leonardo DiCaprio (**Hilton & Hyland**) has purchased a four-bedroom Los Feliz home from **Jesse Tyler Ferguson** (**Compass**) for \$7.1 million.

— COMPILED BY KIRSTEN CHUBA

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NEXT BIG THING

Carolina Miranda

The lead actress of Netflix's Mexican hit *Who Killed Sara?* first broke out on telenovelas: 'We made 25 scenes per day' By Justina Bonilla

"I enjoy that she's a very strong woman always looking for the truth despite her family's objections," says Carolina Miranda of her *Who Killed Sara?* character.

On Netflix's Mexican mystery thriller series *Who Killed Sara?* — which became the streamer's most popular non-English-language series in the U.S. to date when its first season launched in April — **Carolina Miranda** stars as the only daughter of the Lazcanos, one of the country's richest families. She becomes an unlikely ally to Alex (**Manolo Cardona**), who has been released from prison after being framed for his sister's death by the Lazcanos. Amid a dizzying churn of lies, corruption, betrayal and death, Miranda brings a bold yet heartfelt sincerity to the role of Elisa. *Who Killed Sara?* showrunner **José Ignacio Valenzuela** recalls that Miranda won the role because "she displayed hues of emotions, including showing frailty, romance and tenderness. She also has a powerful disposition."

Originally from Guanajuato, Mexico, Miranda found her way to acting through modeling. "I was working as a model at 12 years old," she tells *THR*, "but I needed to express myself at a deeper level." Her breakthrough in television came with the Telemundo telenovela *Lady of Steel* (*Señora Acero*), in which she did all her own stunt work. "It's wonderful because it's very hard work," she says of the fast pace of working on a telenovela. "We made, like, 25 scenes per day."

Miranda is now filming a new Telemundo telenovela titled *Malverde*, about **Jesús Malverde**, the Robin Hood-inspired Mexican folk hero of the early 1900s, just as season two of *Who Killed Sara?* arrived on Netflix on May 19. As her character continues to work alongside Alex to uncover the truth of who murdered his sister, Miranda reveals that Elisa is "going to be very romantic" with him.

The actress — who hopes to pursue U.S. film projects ("I would love to be in movies like *Men in Black*") — says she's "very proud" of the success of the series, a hit in 87 countries: "We've had the opportunity to show the world all the work that we've done here in Mexico." **THR**

VITAL STATS

AGE 30

BORN

Guanajuato, Mexico

BIG BREAK

Who Killed Sara?

REPS

Prensa Danna

About Town

People, Places,
Preoccupations



One Busy Day: Ben Winston's Diary

How the *Late Late Show With James Corden* exec producer juggled also producing the Grammys and directing *Friends: The Reunion* (May 27 on HBO Max) As told to Degen Pender

MY DAY: MARCH 2, 2021

5 A.M. Wake up. I had a lot of stuff on my mind.

6:30 A.M. Treadmill. I've got one of those Fit treadmills where you run [virtually] around Switzerland or on the beach in French Polynesia.

7:15-8:15 A.M. Spend time with kids. I do an hour with my 1-year-old and 4-year-old, making them breakfast and getting them dressed.

8:15 A.M. Drive to work and call Mum in London. I call her most days on my drive in from Brentwood to Television City.

8:30 A.M. Friends set design meeting with production designer **John Shaffner** and set decorator **Greg Grande** to work out how to re-create the sets. Every mug, every light bulb, they literally put it in the archive. But for some reason, we could not find the carpet for the girls' apartment. We had it remade.

9:30 A.M. Production meeting for Late Late Show. Executive producer **Rob Crabbe** leads the meeting — a Zoom with 100 people — and we go through who's on the show. That day it was **Tom Brady**, in his first TV interview post-Super Bowl.

10 A.M. Creative meeting with James Corden (inset). We talk about a song that we want to do about coming out of quarantine with **Ariana Grande**.

10:30 A.M. Edit session for Friends. I love being in an edit. It's where I feel most creative.

11:30 A.M. Meeting about Grammys "In Memoriam." Working out how to make a 15-minute nonstop in memoriam with live performances in the round. We'll have to arrange another meeting. We don't have it nailed just yet.

12:30 P.M. Grammys set meeting. Production designer **Misty Buckley**



Above: Ben Winston (third from left) with the cast of *Friends* on the set of the reunion special. Right: With Grammys host Trevor Noah.

and I talk about how we do outdoor sets with the L.A. skyline behind us.

1:15 P.M. Monologue rehearsal for Late Late Show. We like to make it a few minutes longer than we need so we have room to cut.

2 P.M. Nickelodeon meeting. James and I are making a series we're really excited about based on the book *Real Pigeons Fight Crime*.

3 P.M. Taping with Tom Brady. The only time Rob and James and I get starstruck is when we have athletes on the show. We are like drooling idiots.

4:30 P.M. Grammys budget meeting. Supervising producer **Eric Cook** tells me everything we can't afford and the risks we shouldn't be taking.

5 P.M. Edit of Late Late Show. I always look at one half of the show



and Rob looks at the other. It's never a massive edit. We are six minutes over.

6 P.M. Friends producer meeting. We are re-creating the quiz from that really famous episode.

7 P.M. Get home for bedtime for kids. I like to read them stories and kiss them good night.

8-10 P.M. Grammys producers brainstorm. I open a bottle of red wine. I have a Coravin, so you can open a nice bottle and have one glass.

10 P.M. Creative meeting with BTS team in Korea. They're the only Grammy artists we're allowing not to come. At one point, we were trying hard to get them there. Sadly, due to coronavirus, it wasn't safe.

11 P.M. Emails in bed. I fall asleep at 1:20. This is a typical day. And I don't think I'd want it any other way.



1



2

Well, Hello! The Return of Real Red Carpets

As pandemic restrictions ease, in-person red carpets have begun their comeback. NYC's *Pose* premiere April 29 served as an unofficial ribbon cutting to live events. It was followed in L.A. by a May 13 premiere for Starz's *Run the World*, MTV's Movie & TV Awards on May 16, and a Hollywood Bowl celebration for the Amazon doc *Pink: All I Know So Far* on May 17.

The *Pink* event mandated testing, masks and face shields for just four reporters, while *Pose* featured a fuller red

carpet line but with plastic barricades between outlets. (It also required COVID testing.) Though many people are fully vaccinated at this point, vaccine passports have not yet been accepted for carpet access or as a way to bypass testing.

Some event planners, though, expect the future of Hollywood events to be a mix of virtual and in-person since the pandemic revealed the vastly larger reach online events can have. Says event producer **Tony Schubert**, "For *Borat*, we saw over 100,000 people log on and try to watch the premiere." That said, notes **Maggie Swisher**, who produced the *Pink* premiere, "I don't see a world in which, when it's safe, that we don't go back to blowing it out [in person] for the right film." — KIRSTEN CHUBA



3



4

1 Dominique Jackson at the *Pose* premiere, held April 29 at Lincoln Center. 2 Plastic barriers separated reporters on the *Pose* red carpet. 3 From left: *Run the World* stars Amber Stevens West, Bresha Webb, Andrea Bordeaux and Corbin Reid. 4 Carey Hart and Pink at the Hollywood Bowl.

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Lifetime & THR Celebrate Mentorship

The network's May 24 special, *Women in Entertainment: The Next Generation*, spotlighted *The Hollywood Reporter* and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater L.A.'s scholarship program: 'Education is everything' By Kirsten Chuba



The *Hollywood Reporter's* annual Women in Entertainment event, entering its second decade, looked a little different without its typical in-person Los Angeles celebration. This year, it brought the star power to an hourlong Lifetime special on May 24.

Women in Entertainment: The Next Generation, tied to *THR's* annual Women in Entertainment Power 100 list, was hosted by **Padma Lakshmi**, with virtual celebrity appearances from **Elizabeth Olsen, Kathryn Hahn, Jurnee Smollett, Gillian Anderson,**



Lakshmi

Emma Corrin, Lana Condor, Anitta and Anna Kendrick. The special highlighted *THR's* pioneering Women in Entertainment Mentorship Program, which, in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles, grants \$1 million in scholarships to L.A. high school seniors from underserved communities. More than \$10 million has been given away since the program's inception, which matches teen girls with high-powered Hollywood women.

"It's so important to see women of color, women of all kinds, represented in very powerful

positions for you to be able to dream about yourself pursuing those same positions," notes Smollett.

All 18 mentees receive a \$10,000 college scholarship from Lifetime. Additionally, four full-ride scholarships to partner universities Chapman and Loyola Marymount were awarded courtesy of Sony (sending one student to LMU), Spotify (one to Chapman) and the Chuck Lorre Family Foundation. The latter sponsors two students to attend LMU and Chapman and since 2016 has donated nearly \$1 million, providing nine scholarships. The Wasserman Family Foundation also donated new MacBook Airs to the latest class of mentees.



Anitta

"Education equals widening your mind's view of what is possible, and it helps equal the playing field," says Hahn of the importance of these scholarships, as Olsen notes, "Education is everything, and if we don't do that better for the children in this country, we have failed." Adds Corrin, "Education is the gateway to opportunity."

Five mentor-mentee relationships were explored in the special: **Ali Hoffman** (president, domestic networks, Starz) and her mentee,

Emely; Cassidy Lange (director, original studio film, Netflix) and **Gracie; Deborah Thomas** (senior vp entertainment publicity, NBC) and **Celine; Mioshi Jade Hill** (president, Sirens Media) and **Miranda; and Terry Kalagian** (executive vp creative content, Gaumont) and **Wynda**, with the duos tackling pandemic setbacks, college applications and Hollywood dreams. Says mentee Gracie: "I knew filmmaking was my dream, but I didn't know exactly how to get there. I was sort of giving up." She adds that Cassidy has been there for her "when I don't believe in myself." Program co-founder **Sherry Lansing** also appeared.

Condor offered support as a young person coming up in the industry, saying, "I'm starting to produce some of my own things and I oftentimes feel really scared that my voice doesn't matter, but I'm like, 'No it really does! I just have to be brave,'" a sentiment echoed when **Sara Bareilles** closed the special with a performance of her hit "Brave."

Women in Entertainment, which has counted Lifetime as a partner since its start, is part of the network's push for diversity and inclusion, which includes its Broader Focus initiative,

dedicated to supporting and hiring female directors, writers and producers. In 2019, 82 percent of Lifetime's films were written by women, with 78 percent female directors and 67 percent female



Kendrick

EPs; 75 percent of its series were executive produced by women. The network also has served as a directing launching pad for

Patty Jenkins and Eva Longoria, among others, and it has collaborated with **Angela Bassett** and **Laura Dern** on directorial projects.

"We're a brand that is a voice for women, and because of that we have to walk the walk," says **Paul Buccieri**, president and chairman of A+E Networks Group. "These people who work on all these movies go off and are really additive to the whole creative community."

Adds **Karen Gray**, head of the network's diversity initiatives: "Helping women in underserved communities find a stronger path to college and in the entertainment industry is in line with everything else we've been doing. ... To groom these incredible women with these interesting stories brings these needed diverse voices into the industry down the road, which will just result in better content." **THR**



- 1 A+E Networks Group's Paul Buccieri.
- 2 Netflix's Cassidy Lange with her mentee, Gracie.
- 3 Gaumont's Terry Kalagian with Wynda.
- 4 Sirens Media's Mioshi Jade Hill with Miranda.
- 5 Starz's Ali Hoffman with mentee Emely.
- 6 NBC's Deborah Thomas with Celine. The event was sponsored by Cadillac.

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Carlos Goodman '88
Marcy Morris '81
Robert Offer '92
Danny Passman '05
Robyn Polashuk '94
Gretchen Rush '97
Jason Sloane '88
Cheryl Snow '97

Yes, I Did Say That!

A look at who's saying what in entertainment

Compiled by Mikey O'Connell



“No, thank you. I’d rather die at home.”

SALMA HAYEK

The actress, in *Variety*, saying her doctor “begged” her to go to a hospital when she was suffering from a serious case of COVID-19 last year.

“I consider him a great actor, and I can’t wait to start the movie.”

FRANCO NERO

The Italian director, to ABC News, confirming that he has cast Kevin Spacey in the film *The Man Who Drew God* — the first project for the actor since facing widespread accusations of sexual misconduct.

“Netflix won this several years ago.”

BARRY DILLER

The media mogul, on CNBC, saying that the victor of the streaming wars already has been decided.

“This what I get.”

LIL NAS X

The rapper and singer, on Twitter, confirming that he split his pants while pole-dancing during a *Saturday Night Live* performance.



“There are some things I just can’t tell you on air.”

BARACK OBAMA

The former president, on *The Late Late Show*, demurring when asked about the existence of aliens by house bandleader Reggie Watts.

“I don’t claim to be an expert or a spokesperson.”

DEMI LOVATO

The singer, across social media platforms, revealing they identify as non-binary: “This best represents the fluidity I feel in my gender expression.”



“I love being the underdog. Then you get to kind of laugh in people’s faces.”

KATORI HALL

The *P-Valley* showrunner, to *Deadline*, about low ratings expectations for her Starz stripper drama, which averaged 9 million multiplatform viewers.

“You around ...? I’ve been thinking.”

DAVID ZASLAV

The Discovery CEO, per a report in *The New York Times*, emailing AT&T’s John Stankey in February (with golfer and sunglasses emojis) in the first known overture about a WarnerMedia merger.



FLASHBACK!

Did I Really Say That?



MAY 31, 2015

“The six of us can’t even meet for dinner.”

LISA KUDROW

The *Friends* actress, at Vulture Festival, once cited scheduling issues as one reason why there’d never be a cast reunion. After a 2019 announcement and two canceled attempts at filming in 2020, the special finally taped in April and premieres May 27 on HBO Max.

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Robyn Polashuk, Mitch Kamin and Michael Hill

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Heard Around Hollywood



A still from Lukas Frank's music video. Inset: Scott Frank.

Rambling Reporter

By Chris Gardner

Queen's Gambit Co-Creator Follows Up Success With Music Video

When singer-songwriter **Lukas Frank**, 27, needed a creative collaborator to bring to life the vision he had for a music video for his song "Us Against Us," he called an Oscar-nominated writer and the director of one of the biggest TV shows of the pandemic — his dad, **Scott Frank**, co-creator of *The Queen's Gambit* (in which Lukas has a cameo). His in-demand dad was available and helped him shoot it in one day from a Williamsburg soundstage. "Lukas was so difficult and wouldn't come out of his trailer. Except he didn't have a trailer," Scott Frank jokes. "It was fun to direct him because being a director is being a father anyway. What [they're] really looking for is reassurance that [they're] not going to look like an idiot and that this person [giving direction] will be the best audience ever. That's my job as a director a lot, and certainly my job as a father."

Old Press Conference Transcripts Shed Light on HFPA Behavior Claims

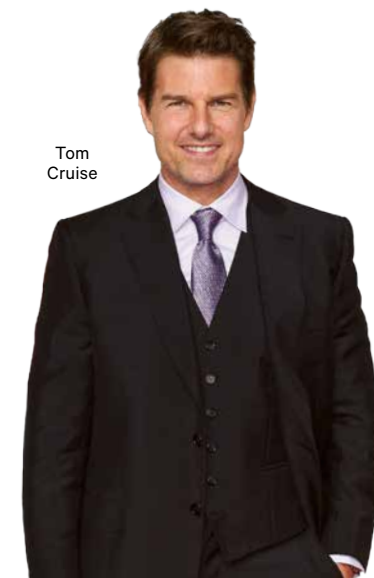
The Hollywood Foreign Press Association "overwhelmingly" approved a new code of conduct May 21 that will require members to act "respectfully and professionally at all HFPA and other industry events." The board added in a statement that "we have been troubled by reports that certain members have engaged in unacceptable behavior in the

past." Members' conduct has become a hot-button issue amid revelations of the HFPA's lack of diversity and after stars like **Scarlett Johansson** have spoken out against the group. Johansson revealed in May that she refused "for many years" to participate in the HFPA press conferences due to "sexist questions and remarks by certain HFPA members that bordered on sexual harassment." *The Hollywood Reporter* has unearthed transcripts from

HFPA press conferences that align with Johansson's claims. In one interview, **Tom Cruise** was asked about taking his clothes off in *Magnolia*. HFPA member **Frances Schoenberger** said she was speechless when he disrobed and asked if he "put something in your pants." Responded Cruise (who recently vowed to return his Golden Globe trophies), "I don't know whether I should feel complimented or insulted." **Rupert Everett** was repeatedly asked about "being a gigolo," while **Denise Richards** was asked, "Have you ever made love to another woman before?" To which the actress replied, "Excuse me? I have no comments on my personal sex life."

No Divas Allowed on Aretha Franklin Biopic Set

TV director **Liesl Tommy** (*Insecure*, *The Walking Dead*) is making her feature debut on *Respect*, the **Aretha Franklin** biopic, due out



Tom Cruise



From left: Hailey Kilgore as Carolyn Franklin, Jennifer Hudson as Aretha Franklin and Saycon Sengbloh as Erma Franklin in *Respect*.

in August and starring **Jennifer Hudson** as the Queen of Soul. Tommy arrived with one firm rule: No divas allowed. "Except for the ghost of Miss Franklin," Tommy explained May 18 during a virtual media event. According to Hudson, the rule had a profound impact on the set. "There was not a soul who did not want to be there," explained Hudson. "It was a family environment, and every single department put their heart into this project."

Bert Fields Warbles Gene Autry Classic for Singing Debut

Even his A-list clients may not know that legal legend **Bert Fields**, 92, has been singing "as long as I can remember." Now they, and everyone else, can hear his talent. Fields has kicked off a singing career by debuting a cover of **Gene Autry's** classic "Back in the Saddle" on YouTube. Fields tells *THR* that friend **Bobby Woods** suggested he record the single, which Woods produced and



Fields

released through his label Heart Times Coffee Cup Studios. As for why he picked the tune, Fields explains, "Somehow the lyrics and music got to me." Is there anything else Fields (who recently released a memoir) wants to accomplish this decade? "Staying alive," he says. **THR**



From top: Conservationist Marjory Stoneman Douglas; rendering of the monument in her honor.

Social Action

Hulu is moving forward with its commitment to correct the dearth of public statues honoring women with the launch of Made by Her: Monuments. The initiative will see the streamer mount public works honoring civil rights activist **Coretta Scott King** in Atlanta, journalist and conservationist **Marjory Stoneman Douglas** in Miami and **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** in Los Angeles. Made by Her: Monuments was made possible through a partnership with visual artist **Saya Woolfalk**, city officials in L.A., Miami and Atlanta and reps for the estates of the three women. The Douglas and King



Ginsburg

monuments will be unveiled this summer, with the Ginsburg artwork slated for 2022. Says Hulu president **Kelly Campbell**: "Now more than ever, it is crucial to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of women and other underrepresented groups, and Hulu is proud to play a meaningful role in doing so." Ginsburg's statue will find a home at the Van Nuys Civic Center in Los Angeles, where it will be in close proximity to the courthouse and public library and what was once a center of Jewish community life. — c.g.

Got tips? Email rambling@thr.com

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1



2



3

1 Katy Tur, Tony Dokoupil and Eloise Judy Bear Dokoupil
2 Jack Dylan Wasserman
3 Paul Mooney

About Town

Mileposts

Harriet Finney was upped to deputy CEO of The British Film Institute on May 17.

Deaths

Paul Mooney, the comic, writer and actor who wrote for Richard Pryor and appeared often on *Chappelle's Show*, died May 19 in Oakland, California. He was 79.

Chuck Hicks, the stuntman, actor and frequent Clint Eastwood combatant whose credits included *Every Which Way but Loose* and *Dick Tracy*, died May 4 in Las Vegas. He was 93.



Grodin

Charles Grodin, who charmed audiences with his droll humor in *The Heartbreak Kid*, *Midnight Run* and the *Beethoven* movies, died May 18 of bone marrow cancer in Wilton, Connecticut. He was 86.

Hitched, Hatched, Hired

Inside the industry's celebrations and news

Weddings

Ariana Grande married real estate agent **Dalton Gomez** in an intimate ceremony at the couple's home in Montecito. The two got engaged in December.

Births

CBS This Morning co-host **Tony Dokoupil** and MSNBC anchor **Katy Tur** welcomed their second child, **Eloise Judy Bear Dokoupil**, on May 13.

CAA digital media agent **Avi Wasserman** and wife **Ashley Silver**, partner at Brechen, Feldman, Breimer, Silver & Thompson, welcomed son **Jack Dylan Wasserman** on April 2 at Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles.

Congrats

Freeform president **Tara Duncan** added to her duties head of

new content brand Onyx Collective, dedicated to the work of creators of color and underrepresented creatives, on May 17.



Liggins

Sharon Liggins was named senior vp communications at Endeavor Content on May 17.

Erika Burton joined DNEG, a visual effects house frequently used by Christopher Nolan, as executive vp VFX and global head of studios May 18.

Kory Lunsford joined Cakestart Entertainment as president and partner May 18.

Lionsgate promoted **Kate Nexon** to executive vp domestic television and digital distribution and **Chase Brisbin** to executive vp international television and digital distribution May 18.

Former *Good Morning America* chief **Michael Corn** was hired as president of news for Nexstar Media Group's *NewsNation* on May 18.

Liang Rubo became ByteDance CEO after Zhang Yiming stepped down May 19.

Juan Ponce was promoted to senior vp and GM of Telemundo Streaming Studios on May 20.

Jenny Stjernströmer Björk was named director of Nordics original series for Netflix on May 18.

Jordan Moblo joined Netflix as director of literary scouting, overseeing book and intellectual property scouting, on May 10.

Rebecca Marks was named executive vp PR and communications of Warner Bros. TV Group effective June 1.

Former *THR* editorial director **Matthew Belloni** joined a venture capital-backed digital media startup

as a founding partner May 16.

Joey Marra was named vp development and executive producer of audio and special projects for Alex Gibney's Jigsaw Productions on May 20.

Maia Malas was hired as head of development and production for Front Row and Rocket Science's Yalla Yalla production company May 19.

Birthdays

MAY 26

Helena Bonham Carter, 55
Lenny Kravitz, 57
Julie Plec, 49

MAY 27

Paul Bettany, 50
Joseph Fiennes, 51

MAY 28

Carey Mulligan, 36
Jake Johnson, 43

MAY 29

Laverne Cox, 49
Riley Keough, 32

MAY 30

Idina Menzel, 50

MAY 31

Clint Eastwood, 91

JUNE 1

Tom Holland, 25 →
Amy Schumer, 40



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The Business

Creative Space

Alan Yang graduated from Harvard at 19. At 25, he was already on staff at comedy favorite *Parks and Recreation*. And by 2016, he'd won his first Emmy for his celebrated co-creation, *Master of None*. Alan Yang rarely takes his sweet time with anything.

That is, until it came to the latest season of the Netflix comedy. The writer, producer and director, now 37, along with longtime collaborator Aziz Ansari, released *Master's* third installment May 23 after a four-year break. During the lengthy hiatus, Yang managed to produce two other series (*Little America* for Apple and *Forever* at Amazon), direct his first feature (Netflix's *Tigertail*) and, for the past year, work in relative secrecy to reinvent the show that jump-started his career. "We wanted it to feel like season one, making this little show that no one cared about," says Yang, a native of Southern California's Inland Empire. "Now we need to get the word out so that people aren't thrown for too much of a loop when they see it."

The loop? That Ansari, previously the face (and still very much a visionary) of the show, is largely absent from the five-episode season, which centers instead on Lena Waithe's character — a creative choice, the producers insist, and not a byproduct of Ansari's recession from the spotlight after a 2018 allegation of inappropriate behavior with a date. Speaking from his New York City apartment, Yang explains the pivot and so much else.

This is not the *Master of None* we saw in the first two seasons. Tell me about the new approach. Aziz and I don't want to do the same thing over and over again. The idea for this season was taking classic techniques of filmmaking and applying them to an extremely modern relationship



Alan Yang

The *Master of None* co-creator discusses a mostly Aziz-free season three, being a Hollywood go-to for AAPI matters, and helping David Chang win *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* By Mikey O'Connell

between two queer Black women [Waithe and Naomi Ackie].

Are you concerned viewers might be confused by Aziz's absence?

We had discussions about him not being in it at all. Then we came back around and decided it's cooler to see him and explore the idea of how friendships change over time. There's been a lot of time since our last season. When

we first made this show, it was a very optimistic time in this country. It was still the Obama presidency. A lot has changed, and we felt, tonally, this was more reflective of the year we just had.

You released your first feature, *Tigertail*, early in the pandemic. Any plans to go back to that world?

I grew up on *Star Wars*, and I love the Marvel movies. And it's been

Alan Yang was photographed May 13 in the home office of his New York City apartment.

great meeting people in that world. Applying a personal story to a big canvas that's seen by a huge audience is appealing, but it's got to be the right thing.

I read that Greg Daniels suggested you tweak a pilot script to make the characters Asian American, but you didn't think it would work.

Photographed by Daniel Dorsa



In addition to stacks of photos, Yang's New York apartment is filled with memorabilia from 2020 feature *Tigertail* — which he filmed in Taiwan. A record by Yao Su-Yong and the Telstars Combo inspired Yang to write the film, and the street sign (a prop) exemplifies the close connection between his family and the film: "The name of the town is Huwei in Mandarin; in English, the loose translation is Tigertail. It's my father's actual hometown."



In defense of 26-year-old me, it seemed unheard of. I was like, "Who are we going to cast? Who's going to greenlight that thing?" You might as well put a target and crosshairs on your script. The last half-hour starring Asian Americans was Margaret Cho's [*All-American Girl*] in the mid-'90s. I didn't have the vision, certainly as a nobody writer, to say "Hey, let's get this thing made!"

When did that change for you? I knew things had changed when I was sent a script with an almost all Asian American cast, written by a white guy. That's progress.

And yet the Institute for Asian American Studies just released a poll in which 42 percent of the U.S. couldn't name one Asian American. That's how I felt in high school! Literally 42 percent can't name

one, and Kamala Harris, who is of Indian descent, is the vice president. It's a reality check.

You're one of few high-profile Asian American producers working today. I assume, with more focus on AAPI representation, that's meant a spike in phone calls.

I've seen a vast increase in calls, yes. I understand that the intentions are good, right? Of course you want to hear voices from that community. It's tricky because you want the people who want to speak to have their voice, but don't want [them] to feel obliged to speak on every single issue.

Is it true that you graduated from college when you were only 19?

I skipped senior year of high school, and I was young for my year. I went to this big public school out in Riverside, and by my sophomore or junior year, my counselor told me I'd run out of classes to take and that I might as well apply to colleges "just to see."

Did that exasperate the culture shock of moving to the East Coast?

I was a bit terrified about being that young, on top of the culture shock and class shock of going to Harvard. I majored in biology, like a good Asian kid, but I wasn't having the greatest time pipetting in those labs. I started playing bass in a punk rock band and writing for [*The Harvard Lampoon*].

Pitching the *Lampoon* while still high school age takes chutzpah.

To be clear, I definitely failed to make it in many times. It's a good place to armor up. You pitch a lot of ideas, but not all of them work. That's kind of the idea for all creative work, right? It helps to get rejected as early as you can.

Your parents are from Taiwan. What do they think of your career?

My mom's a high school teacher and a very blunt critic. Early on, she sent me an email saying, "My students say *Parks and Rec* is boring. They don't like it." End of email. Later on, her students softened on the show.

I can't let you go without asking about *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. David Chang chose you

R É S U M É

CURRENT TITLE
 Founder, Alan Yang Pictures
PREVIOUS JOBS
 Director and writer of *Tigertail* (Netflix) and *Forever* (Amazon Prime)
BIG HIT
Master of None, which won Yang an Emmy for outstanding comedy writing in 2016 with co-creator Aziz Ansari

to join him as "the smartest person he knew," and he ended up being the first person on the 2020 reboot to win the grand prize.

I got so many texts about that! Even Dave was like, "This is weirdly the biggest thing I've done in a long time." The whole experience was a whirlwind. I shook Dave's hand. I shook [host] Jimmy Kimmel's hand. We sat down, knocked out the whole thing in, like, 20 minutes, and then it's "You won a million dollars!" Shout-out to Dave for being unbalanced enough to bet \$500,000 of a charity's money on a question he didn't know the answer to.

Interview edited for length and clarity.



A Frank Lloyd Wright Taliesin lamp, sourced by Yang's go-to production designer, Amy Williams, resembles one used in *Forever*.



Karey Burke
20th Television



Jason Clodfelter
Sony Pictures TV



Jonnie Davis
ABC Signature



Channing Dungey
Warner Bros. TV Group



Jeff Frost
Sony Pictures TV



Erin Underhill
Universal Television



David Stapp
CBS TV Studios

BROADCAST UPFRONTS | LESLEY GOLDBERG TV Studio Chiefs Sound Off

Seven of the industry's top sellers perform an autopsy on broadcast's big week — and reveal what pitch they never want to hear again: 'AOC in a malt shop, AOC in a school, AOC in a maternity ward!'

Juggling rising production costs and declining series orders with a new year-round development cycle, no one had to be more nimble during the recent broadcast upfronts than those in the seats of power at the studios. *THR* caught up with seven studio chiefs, four of whom just wrapped their first upfronts in new roles, as the frenzied week of virtual presentations wrapped to get their takes on the year's victories (and stinging losses), unsettling trends and the odd talent requests that emerged during the pandemic.

A lot of deals had to be renegotiated because of the pandemic. How are you approaching contracts with talent now?

JONNIE DAVIS (ABC SIGNATURE) We're showing more flexibility in letting people do multiple projects for multiple outlets.
CHANNING DUNGEY (WARNER BROS. TV GROUP) There's more focus on how

LESLEY GOLDBERG *THR's West Coast TV editor runs point on all upfronts coverage.*

many episodes there are in a season and how many seasons they are signing on for. That's where deals get hung up. Two years is the new four, especially in streaming.

JEFF FROST (SONY PICTURES TV) We're not getting caught up in the frenzy of chasing after deals. We're making smarter bets and being more strategic.

Many execs had to field unusual requests from talent during the pandemic. What's been the most surprising?

JASON CLODFELTER (SONY PICTURES TV) Paying for people's nannies.
DAVIS If I can get them into Disneyland and Club 33. Even COVID couldn't knock that out.
DUNGEY Asking for the Warner jet because they don't want to fly [commercial].
FROST Travel, from one country to another, to access the vaccine.
DAVID STAPP (CBS TV STUDIOS) It was a fair and legitimate request — but to shut

From left: *The Wonder Years*, *Rebel*, *On Becoming a God in Central Florida* and *Queens*.

down production for five weeks to get the vaccine.

ERIN UNDERHILL (UNIVERSAL TELEVISION) People wanting us to test their entire family and nanny was a little cuckoo.

What's your pitch for a writer or star to do broadcast in 2021?

KAREY BURKE (20TH TELEVISION) Broadcast still makes stars.
CLODFELTER Within two years, everything will be a version of streaming and the consumer won't know the difference.
DAVIS If you can have a show explode on network and then you're on Hulu the next day, it's a double punch.
STAPP You make more episodes and more money. The backend is still viable and can be extremely lucrative.

What's one pandemic impact on your business you didn't see coming?

CLODFELTER The ability to go straight-to-series on broadcast.

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DAVIS Everything: business affairs, producing our shows, making deals, how we work with our artists.

DUNGEY Communication. Trying to get ahold of agents and producers is almost impossible.

STAFF Costs. I don't know that I expected those COVID costs to be what they were and to pose the challenge they do to all of us.

How have those COVID-related costs made you rethink productions?

DUNGEY It's more important than ever to get money onscreen. If you have hidden COVID costs and huge above-the-line costs, what ends up onscreen is less impactful.

Complete this sentence: The most alarming trend I'm seeing is ...

CLODFELTER Fewer original scripted shows; it all tends to be franchises.

FROST Fewer new shows.

STAFF Our ability to adapt and be nimble in a radically changing environment is both alarming and invigorating.

A lot of projects and deals fell apart or just went away during the pandemic. Which one hurt the most?

BURKE Zahir McGhee's [2020 ABC pilot] *Harlem's Kitchen*.

DUNGEY *Girls on the Bus* at Netflix, but we're close to setting it up elsewhere.

FROST *On Becoming a God in Central Florida* — we fought hard and moved it from YouTube to Showtime [which renewed, and then canceled, the comedy after one season].

What's the best call you made or received in the past few weeks — and the worst?

BURKE *The Wonder Years* pickup call to Saladin Patterson, who joked that I bought and then sold it. [Note: Burke ran ABC until December.] The worst was calling Alec Baldwin and Kelsey Grammer. We missed the target for that [untitled] show.

DAVIS Zahir McGhee for the *Queens* pickup. That was an electric pitch. The hardest was Krista Vernoff about *Rebel* being canceled.

FROST The best call was to Howard Gordon, Alex Gansa and David Shore about the *Accused* pickup at Fox.

How the Studios Stack Up on Broadcast

New scripted volume is up from the 2020 low — but still trails pre-pandemic levels

CBS TV STUDIOS



7
New shows

15
Returning shows
including *NCIS*

20TH TELEVISION



5
New shows

9
Returning shows
including *This Is Us*

UNIVERSAL TV



5
New shows

15
Returning shows
including
Brooklyn Nine-Nine

WARNER BROS. TV



4
New shows

15
Returning shows
including
Young Sheldon

ABC SIGNATURE



2
New shows

8
Returning shows
including
Grey's Anatomy

SONY PICTURES TELEVISION



1
New show

4
Returning shows
including
The Goldbergs

Source: *THR* research; tallies include co-productions for each studio and are through May 21, with The CW series orders and midseason pickups/renewals still to come.

What's a passed-over or canceled series you're trying to sell elsewhere?

DAVIS *Rebel* [and pilots] *Adopted* and *Black Don't Crack*.

FROST *For Life* — Hulu is a possibility.

DUNGEY *Prodigal Son* and *All Rise*, both of which we're having conversations on.

STAFF The Sarah Cooper comedy *How to Be Successful in Business Without Hurting Men's Feelings*. It deserves to be on the air.

UNDERHILL *The International* [formerly titled *Echo*].

What pitch do you see way too much of?

BURKE Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Her character has become an archetype at the moment: "AOC in a malt shop, AOC in a school, AOC in a maternity ward ..." We have one in development.

CLODFELTER I don't want to undermine our next announcement or two, but it's hard to be open-minded when we get another request on a feature title or a reboot.

DUNGEY "Fill in the blank" and solves crimes.

FROST We get a lot of reboot pitches — especially for *Married ... With Children* — and most of them are not original or interesting.

What do you suspect audiences will be looking for, contentwise, on the other side of the pandemic?

BURKE Joyous, helpful, unifying, inspirational entertainment.

DUNGEY Now that we're coming back into the light, people are willing to dive into things that are dark, complex and twisty. There's opportunity for both.

STAFF Comfort food.

UNDERHILL Escapist stuff, which can be a crime procedural or a feel-good comedy or soapy drama.

What are the odds of a traditional pilot season returning?

BURKE Less than 10 percent.

FROST Less than 20 percent.

DUNGEY Thirty to 40 percent. It will depend on if advertisers ask for a more traditional upfront.

How about an upfront week where everyone packs into New York theaters?

BURKE Totally unnecessary.

CLODFELTER Zero!

UNDERHILL There is something to be said for the spectacle ... **THR**

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| 100% Wolf | He, She, They | Pirjo |
| 22 July | Hey Lady! | Primates |
| 9 Months with Courteney Cox | Highway to Heaven | Protect Yourself Rules Teen Series |
| A League of Their Own | Hindsight | Revelation |
| About Sex | His Dark Materials | Roald & Beatrix: The Tail of the Curious Mouse |
| Afghanistan: The Wounded Land | Holey Moley | Sesame Street: Elmo's Playdate |
| Akashinga: The Brave Ones | House of Ho | Seven Truths |
| All or Nothing: Tottenham Hotspur | How Not to F*ck Up Your Marriage Too Bad | Slumfood Millionaire |
| Alone | Hubble: Thirty Years of Discovery | Sol |
| Americas Now | I May Destroy You | Space Launch Live: America Returns to Space |
| Ask No Questions | I Was Lorena Bobbitt | Staged |
| Auschwitz Untold: In Colour | I'm Not A Monster | Story to Follow: Beirut, August 4th |
| Autism and Adulthood | Ice Conquerors | The Adventures of Paddington |
| Baroness Von Sketch Show | Imagine: This House is Full of Music | The Au-Pairs in New Zealand |
| Better Things | Italy's Frontline: A Doctor's Diary | The Book of Distance |
| Bluey | Jojo and Gran Gran | The Broken and the Bad |
| Book Hungry Bears: Share a Story | Killing Eve | The Cleaner |
| Brain Games | Kubrick by Kubrick | The Flight Attendant |
| Brassic | Lee Miller – A Life on the Front Line | The Great |
| Brazen | Life Below Zero | The Hunt for Gaddafi's Billions |
| Bug Hunter! | Life Below Zero: Canada | The Last Dance |
| Caliphate | Long Gone Summer | The Last Ice |
| CitizenKid: Earth Comes First | Love on the Spectrum | The Life and Trials of Oscar Pistorius |
| Cosmos: Possible Worlds | Mad Dog & The Butcher – LES DERNIERS VILAINS | The Mole: Infiltrating North Korea |
| Craig of the Creek | Mini Yoga | The New York Times Presents |
| Crikey! It's the Irwins | Molly of Denali | The Rap Game |
| Das Boot | Monster at the End of this Story: A Sesame Street Special | The Revenge of a Woman |
| Dating Around | Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing | The School That Tried To End Racism |
| Des | Mush-Mush and the Mushables | The Story of Plastic |
| Detention Adventure | My Brilliant Friend. The Story of a New Name | The Windermere Children |
| Devs | My Jungle | There Are No Fakes |
| El Presidente | My Rembrandt | Top Gear |
| Endlings | My Stay-at-Home Diary | Tower C |
| Enslaved: The Lost History of the Transatlantic Slave Trade | Naked and Afraid | Toxic Beauty |
| Escape If You Can 2 | NASA & SpaceX: Journey to the Future | Transplant |
| Eurovision: Europe Shine a Light | Nikita Unfiltered | Trash |
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| Filthy Rich & Homeless | Odd Squad Mobile Unit | What We Do In The Shadows |
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| First Day | Other Parents | Woke |
| Frankenstein: How to Make a Monster | Outbreak | Women Undercover |
| Freddie Flintoff: Living With Bulimia | Parliament | Wonder Woollies Play World |
| FYI Investigates | Parliament: The Virtual Experience | ZeroZeroZero |
| Gangs of London | | Zog and the Flying Doctors |
| Ghostwriter | | |
| H2O: The Molecule That Made Us | | |



Style

Timepieces



Meteorite
Dials
for Him

2021 Power Watches

The latest status timepieces for men feature dials made with out-of-this-world meteorite, while the hottest women's watches eschew round cases for square, rectangular and tonneau shapes accented with diamonds *By Laurie Brookins*

1 Omega

The Speedmaster Moonwatch 321 Platinum highlights three subdials in lunar meteorite on a black onyx dial in a 42mm platinum case; \$59,400, at Omega, Beverly Hills.

2 De Bethune

On the DB28XP Meteorite, titanium hour and minute rings surround the meteorite dial, which is heat-treated to create a blue sheen; \$138,000, at Westime, Beverly Hills.

3 Hermès

On the 43mm white-gold and meteorite Arceau L'Heure de la Lune, two satellite subdials rotate clockwise in concert with lunar phases; \$25,500, at Hermès, Beverly Hills.

4 Louis Vuitton

Gibeon meteorite, baguette-cut diamonds and a V-shaped tourbillon carriage adorn the Tambour Curve GMT Flying Tourbillon; about \$100,000, at Louis Vuitton, Beverly Hills.

5 Rolex

On this Rolex Cosmograph Daytona, three black subdials offset the meteorite dial in the 40mm white-gold case; \$34,050, at Rolex at Gearys, Beverly Hills.

6 Louis Moinet

Part of a four-piece "Moon Race" group, the rose-gold "Man on the Moon: 1969" features a lunar landscape in meteorite; \$1.25 million for the collection, louismoinet.com.

COURTESY OF BRAND ©

Style

Timepieces



1 Cartier

The diamond-embellished Santos de Cartier square case is crafted in steel and comes with interchangeable steel and leather straps; \$12,000, at Cartier, Beverly Hills.

2 Chanel

On a quilted calfskin strap, the Boy-Friend Skeleton Watch is housed in an 18-karat beige-gold case with 38 diamonds; \$111,300, at Chanel Fine Jewelry, Beverly Hills.

3 Jaeger-LeCoultre

Enamel work and gem-setting define the high-jewelry Reverso One Precious Flowers in pink gold with diamonds; price upon request, at Jaeger-LeCoultre, Beverly Hills.

4 Patek Philippe

The Ref. 4910/1201R Twenty~4 in rose gold features a brown sunburst dial in a case edged with 34 diamonds; \$44,950, at Patek Philippe at Gearys, Beverly Hills.

5 Tiffany & Co.

The Earth Watch from the Colors of Nature 2021 Blue Book Collection is crafted in yellow gold with four carats of diamonds; price upon request, at Tiffany & Co., Beverly Hills.

6 Hublot

The tonneau-shaped Spirit of Big Bang Beige Ceramic King Gold Diamonds, in ceramic and king gold, is adorned with 50 diamonds; \$24,100, at Hublot, Beverly Hills.

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AND ALL OTHER CATEGORIES

"A RARE CROWD-PLEASING
DRAMEDY"

IndieWire

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OUTSTANDING TV MOVIE

AMAZON ORIGINAL

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Yearly Departed

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LOOK BACK VIA
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Walton Goggins' Favorite Places to Eat Outside in L.A.

As Los Angeles residents increasingly venture out again, the *Spirit Untamed* actor and Mulholland Distilling co-founder picks eight restaurants that nail al fresco *As told to Brad Japhe*

What a year. A mother-fucker for sure. We've all had the same internal monologues: from "I'm so ready for things to get back to normal" and "Nothing is ever going to be normal again," to "What the hell does normal even mean?!" The good news is things are changing.

The fog we've been walking through this past year has handicapped my memory, but the thing I haven't forgotten how to do is have a good time with my friends. The question then becomes ...

where the fuck do I go? The conversations I have with my family tend to go like: "What about so and so," or, "Remember that outdoor patio at ..." to, "I know ... damn, it closed." And that's when it hits you. So many incredible restaurants in our city have closed. Places that felt like second homes. We mourn them, for their loss is our loss.

However, quite a few managed to hold on and even debut, and I am so grateful they did. Whether you visit my favorites or the ones

right down the road, just go and go and go ... and keep going. It's through their adaptability and perseverance that our lives are enriched. They are the fabric of our communities.

BAR RESTAURANT

In Silver Lake. French. A beautiful space and even more beautiful food with perfectly executed cocktails. *4326 W. Sunset Blvd.*

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At the Grove. Family-style food. Some of the best sushi in L.A.



At the Cara Restaurant inside the Cara Hotel in Los Feliz, the outdoor dining area surrounds a reflecting pool.

Has an amazing outdoor bar area with beautiful cocktails and a front-row seat for some fine people-watching and the Grove fountain. *189 The Grove Drive*

CARA RESTAURANT

On the edge of Los Feliz in the new Cara Hotel. Like stepping into a Moroccan courtyard. White linen and palm trees swaying in the breeze. Cocktails created with ingredients from local, sustainable farms. *1730 N. Western Ave.*

CARAVAN SWIM CLUB

Baja-inspired restaurant in Westchester's year-old Hotel June. That ocean breeze! The fish tacos! Best place to stay when you're in between flights or just need to stay away. *8639 Lincoln Blvd.*

CLOVERFIELD

Next to the Santa Monica Airport. Huge, beautiful outdoor space. Creative cocktail menu with great social hour specials. You can even take your dog. *3300 Airport Ave.*

MANUELA

At the Hauser & Wirth art gallery in the Arts District. A wide-open



1 Outdoor seating area at Cloverfield next to the Santa Monica Airport.

2 A spread at Calabra, including the Calabra Meze (baba ghanoush, labneh, crudites, feta and grilled laffa bread).

3 The new Garden Bar at Manuela at DTLA's Hauser & Wirth gallery offers a special Tiki-inspired cocktail menu Friday nights.

courtyard surrounded by remarkable art. Fabulous food with ingredients from some of the best local farms. Cocktails change seasonally and they make their own bitters and tonic. *907 E. 3rd St.*

CALABRA

Rooftop bistro at the Santa Monica Proper hotel with views of the Pacific. Perfect for watching the sunset. Great service and vibe. *700 Wilshire Blvd.*

THE WAYFARER HOTEL

Rooftop dining with unparalleled views. Fire pits and creative cocktails. No better place to watch the sunset in DTLA. *813 S. Flower St.* **THR**

A TRIO OF NEW (OR TRANSFORMED) CHEF-DRIVEN RESTAURANTS TO TRY NOW



Fellow

The Westwood restaurant is now a spot for ambitious Cal-French fine-dining since chef **Chris Flint** (last at **Curtis Stone's** Maude), took over. *1071 Glendon Ave.*



Soulmate

Having worked under **José Andrés**, **Rudy Lopez** offers up Spanish-Med dishes including oven-roasted chicken with harissa. *631 N. Robertson Blvd.*

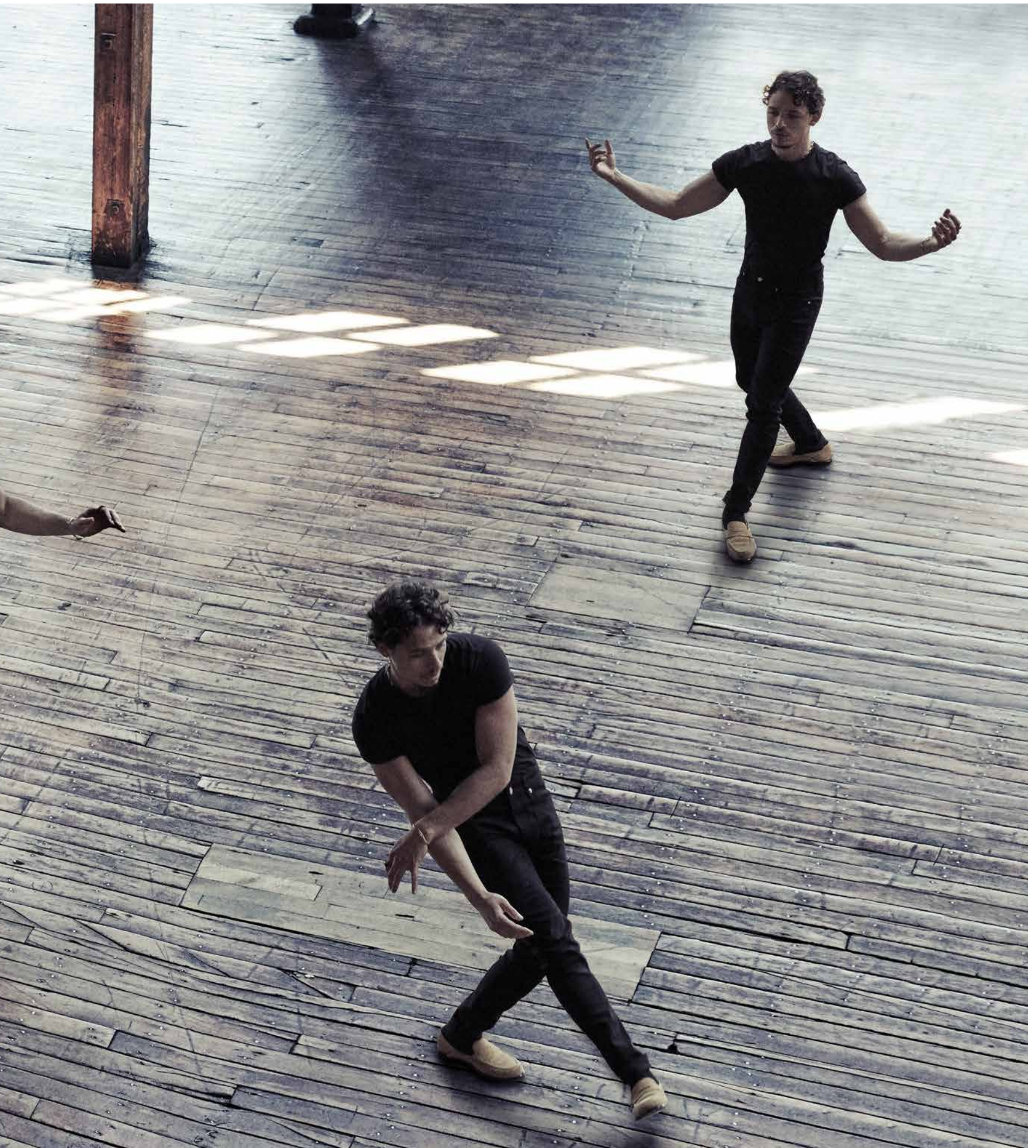


The Barish

Inspired by 19th century steakhouses, **Nancy Silverton's** latest restaurant opened in the Hollywood Roosevelt in April. *7000 Hollywood Blvd.*



**ANTHONY RAMOS
MAKES SOME M O V E S**



**HE CAN SING. HE CAN DANCE. AND NOW HOLLYWOOD IS BETTING THAT HE'S GOT THE STAR APPEAL TO
CATAPULT LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA'S *IN THE HEIGHTS* INTO ONE OF THE FIRST POST-PANDEMIC HITS
BY REBECCA SUN • PHOTOGRAPHED BY RUVEN AFANADOR**

Anthony Ramos was photographed April 26 at Seret Studios in Brooklyn, New York. Styling by Bobby Wesley. Calvin Klein shirt and pants, Loewe shoes.

THE FIRST TIME ANTHONY RAMOS AUDITIONED FOR *IN THE HEIGHTS* WAS EXACTLY A DECADE A G O .

He was 19 and trying out for an ensemble part in a nonunion national tour of Lin-Manuel Miranda and Quiara Alegria Hudes' musical about dreaming, striving and surviving in New York City's Washington Heights neighborhood; he made it four rounds and danced for Miranda in the final audition but didn't make the cut.

Miranda has no memory of this first encounter, not that he would be expected to: In 2011, Ramos was just another drama school graduate amid a sea of chorus line hopefuls trying to get a gig — a hard enough task already but made even more difficult in an industry where Latino roles were scarce.

He would try out once again for another *Heights* show, and then a third time: On that attempt, it was a regional theater production for Actors' Equity members, and although he didn't belong to the union, he followed the casting director into an elevator at Chelsea Studios and slipped him his headshot, securing a last-minute audition to perform a song and recite three lines of dialogue. The casting director liked his rendition of Bruno Mars' "Grenade" enough to send him back out into the hallway with 10 pages of dialogue and music from the show. Fortunately, Ramos

"He sang 'My Shot' like he was Alexander Hamilton reincarnated and, if given a chance, he would run the world," Miranda says. "I've never seen a hungrier presence. He has that thing that movie stars have, which is, the moment you see them, you are rooting for them to win."

That's what Warner Bros. is banking on when the latest version of *In the Heights* that Anthony Ramos has gone after (this time quite successfully) opens in theaters and on HBO Max on June 11. Now he's the lead — Usnavi, the bodega owner working to save up enough money to move to his parents' Dominican Republic homeland — in the highest-profile, highest-pressure role of his career.

"Besides the regular assets of a leading man, our movie is unique in that this person had to be able to cross mediums," says director Jon M. Chu, who compares Ramos to a multihyphenate talent on the order of a young Will Smith. "He had to be able to act through singing, and dance through dialogue. He had to rap from that genuine center of truth and bring moments as small as the flicker of an eyelid to a big number where he's moving just as well as the best

was pushed from June 2020) while also part of WarnerMedia's controversial same-day streaming debut on HBO Max. In success, the movie has a chance to become a cinematic cultural touchstone that Latinos, who over-index as moviegoers but are the most disproportionately underrepresented demographic in Hollywood, have been waiting for.

"We haven't had a movie that feels like *Black Panther* or *Crazy Rich Asians*," says Ramos, who on the *Heights* set was prone to kick off each day with the rallying cry, "For the culture!" or its variants, "For *la raza!*" and, "For my *familia!*"

It was raining and overcast when the ensemble shot one of its massive show-stopping numbers, "96,000," which in a departure from the stage version, is set at the neighborhood's Highbridge Pool. "Everybody was in that water freezing, and it was like, 'Yo, remember: It's for the culture,'" Ramos recalls. "We're yelling out, 'This is for the motherfucking culture!' You could just feel the ancestors, years of people who feel like they have not had this chance, understanding that this moment is our chance. That's what I kept in my heart every single day when I went to set."

RAMOS' FAVORITE IN *THE HEIGHTS*

lyric is Usnavi's epiphany in the closing number, fittingly titled "Finale." Two years after production wrapped and over Zoom from his temporary quarters in Montreal (where he's shooting a *Transformers* movie), he smoothly raps 16 bars, which end on the words "I'm home."

"That is what sums up *In the Heights*," says Ramos, but it's also what sums up his own 29 years on the planet. "I grew up in New York, and my dream was to not live there. Figuratively and physically, New York has done a number on my ass. I know what it's like to struggle, to walk eight blocks in the cold to your apartment. I know how it feels to be hungry for my dreams and also hungry like, 'I could use some McDonald's right now.'"

Ramos grew up in project housing in Bushwick, Brooklyn. His father wasn't around, and his mother worked as a medical biller to support him and his two siblings. "She was making \$30,000 a year before taxes, so that was barely 10 Gs a kid," he recalls. "Contesting with poverty and always seeing her stressed was hard, and there were drugs and alcohol in my family — that was hard to



On the *In the Heights* set, Ramos would often kick off each day with the rallying cry "For the culture!" or "For *la raza!*"



was prepared: As the one musical to feature a Latino company, "[*Heights*] was the only show I felt like I could have a part in, so I had already learned all the male parts."

He ultimately landed a major supporting role: Sonny, the protagonist's younger cousin — as well as his coveted union card. That made him eligible, two years later, to try out for another project, an off-Broadway production then called *The Hamilton Mixtape*. This time, Miranda remembered him.

dancers in the world. And then there's the English and Spanish on top of that. As soon as Anthony got on camera, it was very clear to me that this guy was a star for a whole generation of people."

But the \$55 million movie adaptation of Miranda's first Broadway musical won't just test Ramos' star power. It will also help gauge the industry's health, being among the first wave of summer films to hit theaters during their post-COVID reopenings (its release



"He's got this sexy charm, he knows he's talented, and he's got this relaxed Latino kind of confidence," says co-star Olga Merediz. Gucci blazer and jewelry.

deal with as well. I just didn't want to be in that situation anymore."

As a child, Ramos found emotional escape in baseball and music, buying bootleg CDs — Eminem and 50 Cent but also salsa artist Héctor Lavoe — for \$5 a pop from a vendor three blocks from his family's apartment. "I feel bad for not paying for an album at the regular price as a kid, but anywhere between \$12 and \$20 was a lot of money. Five dollars I could get," he says. "And this dude always had

good bootlegs. You knew that he was going to have all the songs, none of them were going to skip, you were legit going to get your money's worth."

When he was 12, Ramos moved out of his mother's house and in with his aunt in southwest Brooklyn. There, when he wasn't sleeping on a leaky air mattress (later upgraded to a \$60 roll-out bed) in the room he shared with his two cousins, the three boys would stay up late writing and recording

songs using Windows Media Player and a voice memo app. Other than a musical trio he formed in eighth grade to sing Temptations songs at school assemblies, that was the extent of Ramos' pursuits as a performer. He focused on baseball for the next couple of years (he was a two-year starter and earned the team's highest batting average one season) until 11th grade, when he heard an announcement over the PA system calling for auditions for a program called *Sing*. Ramos, thinking he was trying out for a talent show, sang John Legend's "Ordinary People." But it was a musical — worse, a student-created, Greek-mythology-themed jukebox musical — and, to his compounded horror, he landed a lead, which he reluctantly accepted after some coaxing from his high school's musical theater director, Sara Steinweiss.

"I'm wearing this ridiculous crown, I look like Burger King, I was wearing eyeliner, there was way too much blush on my face," he says. He remembers crooning an altered version of "Baby, It's Cold Outside" to his scene partner onstage. "It didn't matter how ridiculous I may have thought I looked before we started. It didn't matter any of the things that might have made me insecure about what I was doing, because it was just this moment where I felt the energy of the audience and I'm singing to her and singing out to the audience and I was like, 'This feels amazing.'"

Ramos continued to chase that feeling for the remainder of high school, juggling baseball with musicals. He hoped to go on to SUNY Purchase, which had both a baseball and a theater program, but amid continued instability at home (he couch-surfed throughout his senior year), he failed to submit his financial-aid paperwork in time and all his college applications were withdrawn. Ramos, sick of staying poor, was ready to give up and join the Navy, but Steinweiss encouraged him to apply to the American Musical and Dramatic Academy, sitting him down to write the essays together and even paying the \$50 application fee and submitting the package herself.

"I knew that if I didn't do this, he wasn't doing it," says Steinweiss, whom Ramos now calls a mentor and close friend. "It's not because he was lazy but because he was exhausted from life."

Ramos got into AMDA (he auditioned with a *King Lear* monologue) but couldn't afford the conservatory's tuition, so Steinweiss arranged for him to meet with a scholarship program funded by the Jerry Seinfeld Family Foundation. Although his academics weren't up to the par of the typical recipient's, they offered to pay the full ride.

“That was when my life changed in an instant,” Ramos says. Steinweiss agrees: “The minute that happened, I knew all bets were off for this kid.”

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR RAMOS TO

realize that he had plenty to learn to catch up to the experience and institutional knowledge of his lifelong-theater-kid classmates: “They knew Rodgers and Hammerstein, Stephen Sondheim, Andrew Lloyd Webber. I didn't know shit about theater.” Ramos was determined to get into AMDA's dance workshop, so he worked the desk at the Roy Arias Dance Studio in midtown Manhattan in exchange for \$3 classes: “If I could get nice with the dancing, then it just gives me another opportunity to get a job.”

There were other strategies to boost his odds. “Folks would say to me that if you grow your hair out and speak in American Standard, you can be more ethnically ambiguous; you won't be in the ‘Latino box.’ I thought that shit was a box, as opposed to being a superpower and just who I am,” says the actor, who years later would be seen on the Grammys stage brandishing the Puerto Rican flag in glee when the *Hamilton* cast won best musical theater album. “I believed that [box] shit for a little bit, but I don't want to be hired for being ambiguous. I want to be hired for who the fuck I am.”

Still, Ramos was having trouble booking work, so he was in low spirits by the time he finally got to catch *In the Heights* during his final semester at AMDA in 2011, while the show was in its closing weeks on Broadway. Seeing the Latino cast onstage gave him enough motivation not to quit, even though the ensuing year was rough, with long gaps between tough gigs: local shows that were constantly late on payment, nonunion national tours, cruise ship performances.

Landing *Hamilton*, in which he played the dual roles of Hamilton's son and one of his allies, was a game-changer, and it might seem like a given that Ramos would go on to headline the *Heights* movie. But Chu initially wanted a slate of unknowns and was conducting a massive casting search in 2018. Miranda had seen Ramos play Usnavi for an abbreviated staging of the musical at the Kennedy Center that spring and urged Chu to take a meeting with him.

“It fits him better [than me]. He doesn't have to put anything on,” says Miranda of Ramos' take on the character that Miranda himself originated onstage. “I think spiritually I'm closer to a Nina [the barrio's burdened overachiever in *Heights*] than an Usnavi, and watching him embody the hopes and struggles of this neighborhood just felt like a suit that fit him perfectly.”



“I don't want to be hired for being [ethnically] ambiguous. I want to be hired for who the fuck I am,” says Ramos. Hugo Boss shirt and pants, Jimmy Choo shoes.

Over breakfast at Toast in West Hollywood, Ramos and Chu formed an emotional connection instantly. “We just wept together, two grown men over coffee crying about his story, my story, and where we were in the world,” the director says. “He embodied everything about this new Usnavi. There was so much heart and so much love pouring out of his pores, he was like speaking poetry at the table. You look at his face and it just expresses his whole journey.”

As befitting a classic movie musical, *In the Heights* opens with a grand number in which the camera sweeps through the neighborhood, winding through small businesses and apartments before catching up with the full company at the climax, salsa-stepping their hearts out on Audubon Avenue.

“Usually in a musical you pull back, but this one was a call on the fly,” says Chu, who recalls looking up at the rapidly sinking sun and determining they had two takes left

to run through the complicated sequence. “What if I pushed in? Amongst all these people, we’re going to find our main character, surrounded by the best dancers in the world doing very, very fast salsa moves, and he’s dancing as big and as precise as everyone else, and we’re going to tell his story. [Anthony’s] focus right into the lens on those two takes we had left is so intense, he’s the glue that keeps it all together.”

For his part, Ramos says the support of the cast and crew kept him from feeling the pressures of his transition from stage sidekick to cinematic leading man.

“I think he knew his responsibility and the weight of this part and this movie,” says Olga Merediz, who has played Abuela Claudia, the barrio’s spiritual grandmother, opposite every version of Usnavi on- and off-Broadway and now onscreen. “Yet the way he carries himself, he’s very sure of himself. He’s got this sexy charm, he knows he’s talented, and he’s got this relaxed Latino kind of confidence.”

“MUSIC’S ALWAYS BEEN MY FIRST love,” says Ramos, adding that after leaving *Hamilton* in early 2016, he took a three-month acting hiatus to hole up in Los Angeles with his music producer, Will Wells, to write songs. The two met during *Hamilton*’s off-Broadway run, where Wells was the production’s electronic music producer: “Every day during the show, every time Anthony got up to sing ‘Raise a glass to freedom,’ my ears would perk up. I just believed him,” Wells says. “After opening night I went up to him and said, ‘Everybody up there is obviously brilliant, but you’ve got something special. Have you ever made a record?’”

In 2018, Ramos independently released an EP, *The Freedom*, and for the next couple of years established a routine: “God willing, get some money from movies and TV shows [which have included *A Star Is Born*, *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* and Netflix’s *She’s Gotta Have It* series], and then spend the money on [making] music.” Now he’s more adept at multitasking, working on songs during downtime on location. “Anthony goes everywhere with a mini-rig and microphone,” says Wendy Goldstein, president of West Coast creative at Republic Records, which signed him in 2019. Goldstein believes conditions are better than ever for a multihyphenate like Ramos to succeed at the box office and on the charts. “He gets more done than some of my artists that just have one job.”

Republic released Ramos’ debut album, *The Good & the Bad*, in the fall of 2019. It’s an autobiography that hops through multiple

musical genres as it winds through his adolescent angst and romantic escapades, including three tracks about his relationship with fiancée Jasmine Cephas Jones. The *Hamilton* alums, who were engaged on Christmas Eve of 2018 and have not yet set a wedding date, are firm about maintaining boundaries between their personal life and professional obligations, so those seeking insights into their bond will have to look for clues in “One More Hour,” “Isabella” and “Mind Over Matter” (the couple offer a tantalizing glimpse into the chemistry of their six-year relationship in the music video for the latter).

The Good & the Bad performed modestly, debuting on top of iTunes’ pop albums chart and peaking at No. 21 on Billboard’s Heatseekers chart, but Ramos and Republic have pop star ambitions for follow-up *Love and Lies* when it drops this summer. While his first two albums explored heavier subjects including politics and nostalgia, the new material is “12 bangers,” Ramos says with a laugh, perhaps accurately gauging the soon-to-be post-pandemic mood. “People don’t want to be in their feelings, they want to be getting lit!”

Love and Lies’ lusty focus is part of a new phase for Ramos, who in addition to bringing a more youthful sex appeal to *Heights*’ Usnavi,



From left: Ramos on HBO’s *In Treatment*; performing during Dick Clark’s New Year’s Rockin’ Eve With Ryan Seacrest 2020 Hollywood Party: “He gets more done than some of my artists that just have one job,” says an exec at his label.

also stars alongside Megan Thee Stallion and *Euphoria*’s Jacob Elordi in Calvin Klein’s Spring 2021 underwear campaign, shot by Terence Nance. It’s a far cry from portraying Alexander Hamilton’s precocious young son on Broadway, where in many ways Ramos came of age.

“*Hamilton* was like a crash course for all of us,” says Miranda. “When Anthony came in, he was just geeked to be there, and I think he came out as someone who could credibly lead

a company on his own with grace and maturity and the understanding that the person at the top of the call sheet determines the tone.”

The boy who couldn’t wait to move out at 12 now finds ways to keep his family close when his skyrocketing career takes him away from his New York City home base. Ramos’ mother and sister both have cameos in *Heights*, while his brother travels with him as his right-hand man for all his big projects, which in 2020 included shooting the upcoming Amblin sci-fi feature *Distant* in Budapest and the new pandemic-set season of HBO’s *In Treatment*, which premiered May 23. In the therapy drama, Ramos plays new patient Eladio, a home health aide haunted by insomnia and his childhood of parental abandonment, and he says the role — and being in therapy himself — has helped him find healing for his family’s turbulent past and grounding for his restlessness.

“It took me until adulthood to appreciate New York,” says Ramos, conjuring up the memory of yet another grueling *Heights* sequence, this one for the sweat-soaked “Carnaval del Barrio” number that takes place when the residents decide to throw a spontaneous block party in the back alleys during a prolonged summer blackout.

“At the end of that shoot, everybody was so hyped that we all huddled in a circle

cheering, ‘New Yorrrrk! New Yorrrrk!’” he recalls. “It was just this New York resilient moment we had together singing this song about pride: *alza la bandera*, raise the Puerto Rican flag, the Dominican flag, the Mexican, Cuban flag. *Pa’riba esa bandera, alzala donde quiera!* Raise that flag wherever you want. Until the day I die, I’m going to be proud of where I’m from. That was the shit. Some of the days were hard, but every day was more than worth it.” **THR**

'ALPHA MALES SCARE THE CRAP OUT OF ME'



▼
CHRIS REDD

He Zoomed in from his Harlem apartment, which he hasn't seen nearly enough of in the past year as he crisscrossed the country working simultaneously on *Kenan* (shot in L.A.) and *Saturday Night Live* (filmed in NYC).

▶
ED HELMS

He shot the entire first season of his Peacock creation, *Rutherford Falls*, and promoted his latest film, Sundance darling *Together Together*, in the time of COVID-19.

▲
PETE DAVIDSON

He piped in from New York, where he's happy to be back shooting *SNL*. "When the pandemic happened, I had to sit with all of my immature irrational decisions," he says. "Not working at all really sucks."





◀ **TED DANSON**

He Zoomed in from Los Angeles, where he shot and promoted his latest NBC comedy, *Mr. Mayor*, during the pandemic.

By Lacey Rose



▲ **BEN PLATT**

He put out new music, starred in a second season of *The Politician* and shot a film version of his Broadway breakout *Dear Evan Hansen* this past year.



LAMORNE MORRIS

After creating and starring in a scripted action-comedy podcast during the lockdown, he's ready for a second season of his Hulu series, *Woke*.



SIX FUNNYMEN, RE-CREATING THEIR PANDEMIC PASTIMES IN PORTRAITS, ON BALANCING THE DESIRE TO GET SERIOUS WITH THE IMPULSE TO PLAY THE HITS: 'SOMETIMES I JUST GOT A DICK JOKE'



or an hour in early May, six enormously talented men convened on Zoom to swap stories and praise. *Mr. Mayor*'s Ted Danson, something of a legend in sitcom-land, had watched *The Office* for the first time during the pandemic and was all too eager to tell Ed Helms, now the co-creator and star of Peacock's *Rutherford Falls*, how fabulous he had been. Helms, ever the mensch, repaid the compliment by telling the entire virtual table that Danson has always been an inspiration to him. Later in the same wide-ranging conversation, part of *The Hollywood Reporter*'s annual Emmy Roundtable series, *Woke*'s Lamorne Morris described the talent toolbox of Ben Platt, the Tony winner who stars on

Netflix's *The Politician*, as genuinely "mind-blowing" and then tried to convince Danson to guest star on *Woke*'s second season. "And when you're done there, come on down and host *Saturday Night Live*," *SNL* and *Kenan* star Chris Redd piped in, to which Danson replied, referring to his January 1989 hosting gig, "Scariest thing on the planet, I'd never do it again." Then Danson, being Danson, used the opportunity to laud the particular skill and stamina of Redd and his *SNL* co-star Pete Davidson: "You guys are comedy commandos," he said, "and you have a crapload of youth and adrenaline."

Let's start with an icebreaker: If a fan is coming at you, what is he or she most likely to say or do?

LAMORNE MORRIS They tryin' to fuck ... No, I'm joking. (*Laughter.*)

ED HELMS That's an icebreaker.

MORRIS No, I was on a show called *New Girl*, and people come up and ask me constantly about my cat on the show. So it's, "How's Ferguson?" And he's dead. But I'm fine!

CHRIS REDD A large number of people come up to me and ask me to tell Pete Davidson something. Like, love letters, but through me.

Pete, would he deliver them?

PETE DAVIDSON Of course not.

REDD I delivered one or two our first year working together, and then I realized just how many it was. (*Laughter.*)

DAVIDSON And I usually just run away because I'm terrified of life and people.

HELMS People just scream "Nard Dog" [a reference to his character from *The Office*] at me from

very far away. Like, all the way across airport terminals ...

What do you do?

HELMS Oftentimes I'll just do that awkward thing where I pretend like I didn't hear it but then, like, 30 people suddenly look at you and then they start shouting "Nard Dog" and ... yeah, it's just awkward. (*Laughs.*)

TED DANSON I get a lot of people coming up and saying, "My grandmother loved watching you on *Cheers*." And I'll say, "Hold on, let me turn on my hearing aids. OK, say again?"

BEN PLATT For the record, I also watched you on *Cheers*. (*Laughs.*) For me, it's usually one of two things, it's either somebody asking me to do a magic trick, something having to do with *Pitch Perfect* or it's somebody who had a very cathartic *Evan Hansen*-related experience who immediately starts to cry and ask me about mental health and things I have no real answers for.

How do you respond to both camps?

PLATT To *Pitch Perfect*, I have one little sleight of hand thing that I can do, but only if I have this one scarf thing with me. And to *Dear Evan Hansen*, I just try to be a good listener. I feel like I weirdly became a mental health expert in theory because of that show and, obviously, I'm still figuring out my own shit.

HELMS Have you tried doing the sleight of hand for those people?

PLATT I will now. (*Laughs.*)

Ted, you've played a lot of different characters in your career. You've played meathead, evil, rich, smart, you've even played Ted Danson. Where are you happiest or most at ease as an actor?

DANSON The best joke is the slow, dumb joke. And the older I get, the further away I seem to be. I worked for Mike Schur [on *The Good Place*], and it was like paragraphs of the most heightened Shakespearean language, and it drove me nuts because I had to work so hard for it. But I like doing drama that's funny — and I like funny that has a source of either pain or sadness that's genuine at the core of it. Perhaps, next time out, I'll pick something that's more *Fargo*-esque than *Cheers*, but the opportunity to work with Tina Fey and Robert Carlock [on *Mr. Mayor*] came along and it was a no-brainer because it was this different strain of comedy that I hadn't experienced.

How about the rest of you? We had Hugh Grant on a Roundtable a few years ago and he said no one wants to be the good guy, it's harder and arguably less fun. Do you agree?

DAVIDSON That Hugh Grant is full of shit! No, I don't know ...

REDD I like crazy characters, they're more interesting. I grew up around a lot of crazy people. I have a huge family, like more than 200 people, and we've got everything from normal schoolgoers to crackheads. It's just fun to find different ways to play crazy. Confident and dumb is where I love to live.

MORRIS I love playing someone who is not supposed to be high-status — a low-status person who's trying to up that status for himself. That's the most fun.

Ben, you went from doing *Evan Hansen* every night to doing *The Politician*. These are obviously very different characters. Do you find yourself more at ease in one versus the other?

PLATT Yeah, where I feel most naturally is the more wallflower, anxious, self-deprecating kind of a guy. Because I did spend so long doing that show — and doing *Pitch Perfect* before that and *Book of Mormon* before that, all of which are iterations of that same guy — I've found I really enjoy playing people with a bit more aggression and hubris, like Payton on *The Politician*, just to get to do something that I don't do in my life. The nerdier guys are much closer to who I actually am.

Ed, there are traces of characters you've played before in your *Rutherford Falls* character, which you've described as "the earnest, well-intentioned guy who



has some serious blind spots." What's the draw for you?

HELMS So much of what I loved about playing Andy Bernard [on *The Office*] is that he just wanted so badly to do the right thing and be the best version of himself, but he had so many hurdles and just got in his own way all the time. And in a way, he is the very heightened expression of how I feel a lot. In other words, I feel similar to Andy Bernard but just with better editing and coping skills. (*Laughs.*) And I think Nathan Rutherford is a slightly more advanced, nuanced version of him who's a little bit more complex just because it's a more complex story. It's definitely in my comfort zone to play those kinds of characters, but I also have

an inner Don Knotts that is always trying to get out and always ruining takes. Directors are always like, “OK, uh, let’s pull it back.” But I love being a really aggressively wrong character with some physical wackiness.

Pete, what are the things that writers on SNL come to you with where you say, “Eh, I don’t think so”? And what are the ones that excite you?

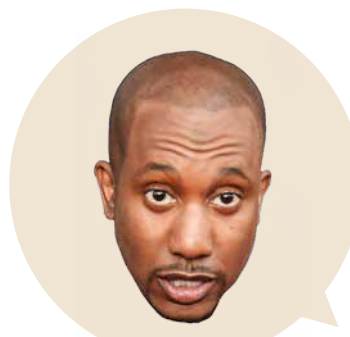
DAVIDSON Well, so few come my way that I have to do them all. The thing about SNL is you really don’t have much of a say. It’s just, “Hey, this is what you’re going to do this week,” and you’re like, “Oh, cool.” I do like the randomness of it and I usually play very dumb characters. So, it’s very easy for me. *(Laughs.)* I have one character that I’ve done in my seven years on the show, which shows how fuckin’ great I am. His name is Chad and he’s very dumb and every response is just, “OK.” And I see a lot of myself in Chad.

that you could have been a part of a movie-star mentorship program. You described a setup where you could do brunch with established stars, maybe once a month, where you’d ask questions about how to navigate your career and fame. First, do I have the concept right?

HELMS More or less ...

Great. So, what do you wish you knew and how would it have changed your journey?

HELMS I had this gradual build of fame or celebrity, if you will, until *The Hangover*, and then it just became this astronomical thing that was so unfamiliar and, in many ways, scary. So, I’ve often reflected on how I wish there was a mentorship program for celebrities or some way to just help younger actors navigate some of these circumstances. There’s just so much unexpected, and the industry is set up in a way that’s sort of sink or swim. Like, you either know how to do it or



“THE FIRST TIME THAT PEOPLE STARTED RECOGNIZING ME A BIT, I THOUGHT THEY WANTED TO FIGHT. THEY’RE SAYING SHIT AND I WAS LIKE, ‘WHAT? WHAT YOU WANT?’ ” **Chris Redd**

that really easily, and for some reason, I just grappled with a lot of anxiety moving into that.

What were you worrying about exactly?

HELMS Well, it’s a lot of the social stuff. Suddenly you’re invited to

MORRIS But even if you had a mentor, they can only tell you so much. They could show you some of the pitfalls, but you’re going to walk through them anyway. And that’s the best possible way to learn. I’ve made a million mistakes, but I’m also one of those people who’s extremely cautious. This isn’t the trajectory that I thought about when I was a kid who wanted to act. I’d see Eddie Murphy on TV, and I just wanted to be Eddie Murphy. And I’m happy with my career — I wouldn’t trade it for anything — but it’s slow. It’s a gradual build because I’m tiptoeing.

REDD Just to piggyback on the gradualness — of going from no one knowing you to some people recognizing you is so different than what you think it is outside of this. I remember the first time that people started recognizing me a bit, I thought they wanted to fight. They’re saying shit and I was like, “What? What you want?” I almost beat up a fan, it was crazy. *(Laughs.)* So, a little mentorship would be nice, but it is a lot of learning yourself and your triggers and what’s right for you. I had a ton of anxiety going to the Emmys or to these big events that I had never even thought about going to before getting into this, but no one could really prepare you for that, either.

Ben and Pete, you’re both at places in your careers where there are a lot of opportunities coming your way. What’s the best and worst advice you’ve received?

PLATT I started working in musical theater when I was 9, so my whole life was pointed toward the experience that I ended up having at 23, which was doing *Dear Evan Hansen* — getting to originate a role and a Tony award and all that stuff. And there was a real scarieness in reaching that so quickly because I felt like, “Well, now is everybody done with me? Is that all I have to offer?” It’s something you think you’ll continue to work toward, and obviously I feel incredibly fortunate that it happened in such a fantastic way, but I had to embrace the freedom of the opposite of what Ed was saying, which is the limitlessness of, “Now what do I really want to



HELMS I love Chad because he’s so game for anything. I think he’s aspirational.

DAVIDSON He’s a good guy, he means well. *(Laughs.)*

DANSON Pete, I just have to say I love funny, which you are, but you’ve got an edge of danger in you that I find fantastic to watch, to know that I’m going to laugh but also be a little nervous ... I wish I had that. I’m your run-of-the-mill nice actor. You’re dangerous and I love that. I love watching you.

DAVIDSON Oh, thank you so much. They don’t pay the dangerous. *(Laughs.)*

Ed, I’ve heard you say how much you wished, post *The Hangover*,

you don’t. And the thing I wish I had understood more early on is [that I should] just relax and enjoy some of it and not panic so much. I think when you have a big step-up in opportunity, there’s a fear that comes with it in terms of making the right choices, and I got a little overwhelmed by that for a period and it’s not worth it.

What does it look like from the inside?

MORRIS Money, money, money ...

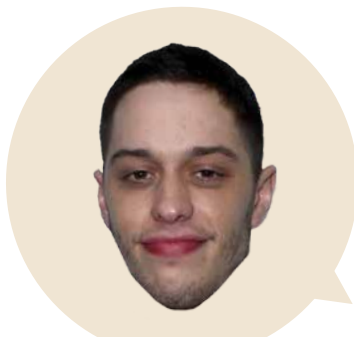
Right. I’m seeing a lot of money signs from the group here ...

MORRIS You bought the Ferraris, come on, Ed. *(Laughs.)*

HELMS Some people are really equipped to just slide right into

things that are overwhelming. People don’t realize celebrities also get starstruck and feel awkward at times. I certainly still do sometimes. And then your agents are suddenly coming at you with things that are exciting but maybe there are competing things or it’s like, “Oh, if you do this, you can’t do that.” And you’re like, “But I’m friends with that person and I think they’re brilliant, I want to work with that person.” “Well, you can’t ... I mean, sure, you can do it, but you’re going to blow this.” And it’s just like, “Aaah!” And I have much better tools now and maybe I’m just more chill as a person, but there was definitely a period there where I was like, “I want a mentor.”

1 Davidson on NBC’s *Saturday Night Live*. 2 Morris on Hulu’s *Woke*. 3 Helms on Peacock’s *Rutherford Falls*.



"I'M SURPRISED I MADE IT TO SEVEN [SEASONS ON SNL]. I'M READY TO HANG UP THE JERSEY. KENAN'S LIKE FUCKIN' KARL MALONE OUT THERE."

Pete Davidson

do?" and, "How can I continue to challenge myself when the hardest pinnacle of what I could have imagined has already been checked off?"

So, what do you strive for now?

PLATT I've tried to allow my guide to be what are the things that make me excited and allow me to work with people I want to be around. And I think there is a real desire, especially when something is going very well or when you're trying to "strike when the iron is hot," to continue to wedge yourself into these particular bubbles or spaces or boxes that we're all supposed to be heading toward — to want to be a Marvel superhero or to want a big, dramatic Oscar film — these things that still exist and that maybe I have a bit more of a foot in the door to audition for and get in for because of where I have been. But I don't think that necessarily means that those are the things I really want to strive for just because I'm supposed to want to strive for those things. So, it's been riding that line of not being an idiot and taking advantage of the opportunities that present themselves, but also allowing myself to really make art that I'm excited about, particularly where I am playing queer characters.

You just threw out a handful of things that you're supposed to want: the Marvel superhero, the dramatic Oscar role. What are the things that you all actually covet?

HELMS I think Oscar-winning, dramatic Marvel superhero. I feel like that's out there. And I'm right for that. *(Laughter.)*

DANSON To go back, being a celebrity is kind of like being a 5-year-old in a room with all the adults staring at you — and with all the energy coming that kid's way, you spin out. It's too hard to handle all that energy. I was very lucky early on, halfway through *Cheers*, that I started doing ocean advocacy and I started an organization. I realized that if you take that energy coming your way and you deflect it into something you care about, then you become OK with all of it. So, "Thank you for watching *Cheers*, I want you to come into the tent here and meet this marine biologist" became a use of my celebrity, and that served me well over the years. And as far as bucket lists or anything, can I just please stay erect? Can I hit my marks and remember my words?

feel to play a Black cop with a cat named Furguson?" And I'd be like, "That's clever as shit, but stop asking me that." I did want to address it though, so I wrote an episode about it — and then I wanted to get more mileage out of that, but you can't really do that on such a happy, happy show. So, when I was done, I wanted to do something that felt more authentic to some of the things that I had been through and friends of mine had been through, and then *Woke* came along. It's about a nerdy Black dude who doesn't think racism is an issue. He doesn't see it, he just wants to draw cartoons and become successful and keep his head down, and then the police rough him up a bit, he has a bit of PTSD and he starts seeing things [inanimate objects that come to life]. I wanted to be a part of something with more stakes, more weight to it, but also can poke fun at it. I mean, I have a racist marker

and feel moved to say something about it, obviously with some intelligence behind it, I think you should.

Do the rest of you feel pressure to use your platforms to speak up?

REDD Just being Black in America on TV forces you to relate to that. I have always stood up and protested injustices. And in my work, especially my stand-up, I like to speak to some of that. But I also feel like part of our freedom is to be able to just create without having to represent something every single time you do it. So, it's walking that line of representing your people and speaking to the culture but also having the freedom to just create without being bound to an injustice every time. Because sometimes I just got a dick joke. *(Laughter.)*

DANSON And I play a billionaire politician [on *Mr. Mayor*] who is about as white as you can get and



REDD I heard "please stay erect," and I'm like, go ahead, brother. *(Laughter.)*

Lamorne, you spent seven years on *New Girl*. When it ended, you said you wanted to be part of something "that meant something." What did that mean to you?

MORRIS Well, *New Girl* was just silly, that's what it was. I mean, it was cool and fun and there are subject matters that we'd touch on, but there's only so much you can do in a 22-minute show. I had a cat on the show named Furguson and I'm a Black dude who plays a police officer and, when the incident in Ferguson happened, I was getting all these tweets, like, "Yo, how does it

that's played by J.B. Smoove. How fuckin' ridiculous can you get?"

At one point, your character laments, "Why is it that us people of color are always having to stand for something or say something in our work?" Have you felt that same pressure with your art?

MORRIS Yeah. I sometimes feel like we've all got to jump on the thing, but you don't have to say anything if that's not who you are. Personally, I wasn't that guy at all. I didn't know enough, didn't read enough, I just wanted to book a job and be taken seriously as an actor. And then you start to see people listen to you and your neighbor is going through something and if you have a platform

as old as you can get, so I guess I'm doing my part by pointing out how wrong that is. *(Laughter.)*

It seems like the SNL culture has changed. You're now able to take time off to do these other projects and still be part of the show ...

REDD I think it's very true. I came in with a couple jobs already, so that was one of my things. I was like, "Yo, I gotta be able to do stand-up and I gotta be able to do a couple things here and there in the summer at least." And it's been nice. I mean, I don't sleep. I haven't slept since last year, but I was broke till I was 30, so I don't need to sleep.

MORRIS That's unhealthy, brother. Take a nap.

1 Platt on Netflix's *The Politician*. 2 Redd on NBC's *Kenan*. 3 Danson on NBC's *Mr. Mayor*.

REDD For *Kenan*, we were flying on Friday nights to get [to New York] Saturday morning and then we'd sleep and come into the studio and rehearse a couple times and then do the show [*SNL*] and then fly out [to L.A.] Sunday at 8 a.m. to shoot *Kenan* the whole week. We're hoping to not have to do that again, but it was very dope to be working with your friends.

Kenan Thompson's been on *SNL* for 18 seasons. What's your reaction to the prospect of doing that kind of run?

REDD I would never do 18 seasons. (*Laughs.*)

DAVIDSON Yeah, I'm good. I'm surprised I made it to seven. I'm ready to hang up the jersey. Kenan's like fuckin' Karl Malone out there.

REDD He's a legend for it and I think he can have that marker. (*Laughs.*) Like, I'm definitely having a good time, it's better than the first few years. I mean, I had a good first year and then with my



3

second year it was kind of wild. But I don't know how anybody does 18 years. It's boot camp.

Fair enough. For all of you, which are the careers that you look at and say, "Oh, yeah, I'd love that"?

MORRIS I mean, Eddie Murphy's. Coming from the South Side of Chicago, you'd see the hood all-stars, the drug dealers and the ballplayers, but I grew up in the church, so you wanted to have a real job. You'd see Eddie Murphy, and he felt like one of those dudes who lived in your neighborhood. He wore leather pants, he had his shirt open, and he was talking shit, and that was really the first time I thought, "Man, that's like a rock star, but that's a rock star I

could potentially be like one day." But then he took some time off, and the more I'm in this business, there are times where I want to take a lot of time off and still be able to come back at any point. And then Jamie Foxx, who's one of those people where you see him hosting a TV show, you see him winning an Oscar, you see him singing and playing the piano, and I wish I could do those things.

REDD I'd say Eddie mixed with [Dave] Chappelle. I like how Chappelle never really stopped stand-up. I wish Eddie had just kept doing it.

DAVIDSON You get to see a lot of people at *SNL*, and there's this aura around Eddie Murphy where you're just like, "Holy shit, that's Eddie Murphy." [Adam] Sandler is like that, too, you just can't believe you're seeing him in person. I'd like the Eddie Murphy, Sandler career. I like what Sandler did where he's like, "These are my eight friends, we're going to do this formula for the next 30 to 50 years." He built this entire universe for himself, and he's in his own lane. That's the model. Also, the way he carries himself I try to follow. He's so kind to everyone, and you never hear of a Sandler issue — there's never like a Sandler-gate. Any time you see that guy's face, it's associated with smiles and good vibes. That's the thing I'm trying to follow.

DANSON I got the opportunity to get to know Gregory Peck and Sidney Poitier a bit, and to me those are such elegant gentlemen in this business and were actor-activists, and that combination really appeals to me. And Jane Fonda is one of my heroes. At 83, she has her foot on the gas pedal and is going a million miles an hour. But if I had to pick someone I wanted to emulate, it'd be Dick Van Dyke.

How about you, Ed?

HELMS Are we allowed to pick somebody here? Because Ted Danson has always been an inspiration for me.

DAVIDSON Yeah, Ted, I hope I look like how you look like when I'm 40. (*Laughs.*)

HELMS Your career has been such an inspiration for me. When I was a kid watching *Cheers*, it was that energy that I wanted to follow. So, thank you for paving that road.

DANSON Man. Thank you. I'm so touched that you said that. I know I should be blowing that off but I'm taking it in, really ... I'll dine off that.

Hollywood is a place that likes to keep people locked in lanes. What roles come your way and you think, "No, not this again"?

PLATT Tech nerd, computer nerd, guy at the IT company, gay friend, nerdy gay friend ...

DAVIDSON Pothead, drug addict, crackhead ...

REDD Rappers, up-and-coming rappers ...

MORRIS I get nerdy all the time, and I've always wanted to be in a superhero movie and I finally get the call about auditioning for ...

DAVIDSON *Blood Shot!* You were great in that.

MORRIS Thanks, man. I was like, "This is my opportunity!" Then I read the script and it's a fucking nerd — a nerd in a superhero movie. But then the pandemic started and no one saw it.

DAVIDSON I saw it the day it came out, it was great.

HELMS I get a lot of offers to be douchebros who mean well, which I guess is what Andy Bernard was. And I love Andy Bernard, I loved playing that part so much, but I've started looking for different lanes at this point.

How about you, Ted?

DANSON Alpha males scare the crap out of me, so anything where I'm supposed to be alpha or manly or masculine, either I'm really bad at it, which is true, or it really bores the crap out of me, which is also true.

And finally, complete this sentence: I wish Hollywood would cast me as ...

DAVIDSON I just want to be the fifth or sixth guy in like a lot of movies. (*Laughs.*) You know what I mean? I just want to be that guy. I want to like, Buscemi my career real hard.

REDD I really want to be a Black John Wick. Same hair, just Black.

DAVIDSON I also want to be a Black John Wick.

DANSON I want to be cast in something with my wife, Mary [Steenburgen], and shoot it next door. It's all about location now.

HELMS You will have a pitch on your desk tomorrow morning. (*Laughs.*) I don't know how realistic this is, but I've always wanted to be a martini-drinking, debonair supervillain and/or hero. Like a James Bond. Come on, Hollywood, how is *this* not James Bond? (*Laughs.*)

DANSON I think we should make a movie called *The Roundtable* and it's just us. We're the cast.

MORRIS Absolutely, I'm down.

REDD I'm down.

DAVIDSON I don't want anything to do with it. (*Laughs.*)

DANSON Perfect, that'll be the first line.

Conversation edited for length and clarity.

TUNE IN ON THR.COM

THR Roundtables will roll out through June in print and online.

Watch new episodes of *Close Up With The Hollywood Reporter* starting June 23 on SundanceTV — and look for video highlights at [THR.com/Roundtables](https://www.thr.com/Roundtables) and extended episodes on [THR.com](https://www.thr.com) after broadcast.





15TH ANNUAL

POWER LAWYERS

When Hollywood gets disrupted — whether by a pandemic or a paradigm-shifting merger like the one between AT&T’s WarnerMedia and Discovery — it’s the lawyers who must rewrite the rules of the game. And if there’s anyone who can negotiate tentpoles pivoting to streamers, mediate the detente between writers and agents and navigate the still-insatiable appetite for content, it’s the entertainment industry’s top 100 attorneys — who may never go back to wearing suits and heels but definitely will return to The Grill on the Alley EDITED BY ASHLEY CULLINS

2021



Riz Ahmed (right), whose performance in *Sound of Metal* landed him a best actor nomination, was photographed on Oscar Sunday with his lawyers Daniel Passman and Tara Kole at the Sunset Marquis in West Hollywood.

Photographed by **Josh Telles**

TALENT

James Adams
Schreck Rose

CORNELL LAW SCHOOL

Adams likes helping clients who don't want to be just one thing — like Kevin Hart, who started in stand-up and this year landed a four-year nine-figure acting and producing deal at Netflix. Or John Krasinski, whose transition to writing and directing with the *Quiet Place* movies was so successful that he secured a first-look overall deal at Paramount. "Everybody on this list can do the job," Adams says, "but I most enjoy representing multihyphenates and making all those negotiations work together."

What's the power lunch spot you can't wait to get back to?

"I say, 'Thank God for no more lunches!'"

CORPORATE

Tom Ara
DLA Piper

LOYOLA LAW SCHOOL

Ara added Apple and TikTok to his list of longstanding clients during a year in which many were simply bating down the hatches, assisting both with their rapid original content expansion plans (for Apple TV+ he helped secure key production facilities in L.A.'s crowded studio market). Alongside shepherding major deals such as CJ Entertainment's sale of music show *I Can See Your Voice* to Fox and ZASH's acquisition of TikTok rival Lomotif, Ara also continued to work pro bono for the Blackhouse Foundation, and this year was appointed to its board of advisers.

My new mantra is ... "If a cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind, of what, then, is an empty desk a sign? — Albert Einstein"

TALENT

Karl Austen
Jackaway Austen

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Austen is known for leading and coordinating high-level renegotiations for TV casts and last year went into action with new deals on *Young Sheldon* and *Umbrella Academy* for clients Zoe Perry and Tom Hopper, respectively. The attorney, who became co-managing partner of his firm last spring, also made deals for new client Dave Bautista for *Knives Out 2* and *Thor: Love and Thunder*, juggled the empire of Seth MacFarlane, put Jude Law in *Fantastic Beasts* and *Peter Pan & Wendy*, and helped directors Adil El Arbi and Bilal Fallah navigate the Marvel and DC worlds.

The NFT I'd buy in a second is ... "A Seth MacFarlane original artwork."

LITIGATION

Jill Basinger
Glaser Weil

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL

"Hollywood and the real world have blended a little bit in terms



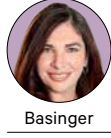
Adams



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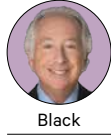
Austen



Basinger



Bernstein



Black



Bobb



Boutrous

RAISING THE BAR HONOREE

'You Have to Manage the Aftermath'

MGM's top attorney has guided the studio through acquisitions, expansions and pandemic pivots

BY MIA GALUPPO

In the middle of closing a complicated film output deal in 2007, Lesley Freeman found herself traversing the streets of midtown Manhattan, where she worked at the time, in a pedicab during rush hour on a Friday afternoon to pick up her 5-year-old daughter from day care. "There were no cabs," says Freeman with a laugh. She was brokering an agreement with Fox for her then-employer, HBO. When she got back to the office, colleagues and her boss took turns babysitting, ordering food delivery, and transforming a couch into a makeshift bed for her daughter. The deal was signed at 9 o'clock the next morning, and Freeman gained important insight into a key factor for career success. She says, "People were



Lesley Freeman was photographed May 14 in Encino, California.

of #MeToo," says Basinger, whose work is now crossing into politics with her representation of Lindsey Boylan, the first woman to publicly accuse New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo of sexual harassment. Basinger is also representing a number of confidential clients who have been accused of assault and helped secure a win for ICM when the California labor commissioner found agent Rob Prinz was due his full commission in a dispute with Celine Dion.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... "Making me hate pants with buttons or zippers."

TALENT

Jeff Bernstein
Jackaway Austen

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Bernstein reps a client list of heavy-hitter female actors, including Oscar nominated Carey Mulligan, who signed on to Netflix's *Maestro*, which she will star in opposite Bradley Cooper; and Margot Robbie will lead Damien Chazelle's *Babylon* with Brad Pitt, and her production company, LuckyChap Entertainment, signed a new first-look deal with Amazon. He also counts Judi Dench, Tessa Thompson and Hilary Swank among his clients.

What's the worst piece of advice you've ever received?

"Give up your New York apartment."

CORPORATE

Daniel Black
Greenberg Traurig

GEORGE WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF LAW

Black is the lawyer brands call when they're looking to make a splash in Hollywood. Existing clients include Pokémon, Spin Master (*Paw Patrol*) and Gates Ventures (Bill Gates), and he's signed new ones like video game developer Bungie (*Halo*). Over the past year, that's meant more than \$2 billion in deals — and that's not counting \$130 million in employment and separation agreements he's negotiated for his C-suite clients.

What's the power lunch spot you can't wait to get back to? The Grill

TALENT

Gordon Bobb
Del Shaw

COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL

"I don't think this is the end of moviegoing. That demise has been forecast many times before," quips Bobb, who troubleshot *Space Jam* director Malcolm D. Lee's contract when WarnerMedia announced its 2021 day-and-date release plans. Bobb is tasked with keeping up with the town's most in-demand and prolific creatives like Ava DuVernay, who is behind Netflix's Colin Kaepernick limited series and HBO Max's *DMZ*.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... "Making my work-day 24 hours."

LITIGATION

Theodore Boutrous Jr.
Gibson Dunn

USD LAW

Boutrous is there when an industry's future rides on a big argument, and in the past year he was honored by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press for continually standing up to the Trump administration in First Amendment fights. He's now on Apple's side in a huge antitrust showdown with *Fortnite* developer Epic Games, in Brad Pitt's corner in the Angelina Jolie divorce, and leading Ashley Judd's fight against Harvey Weinstein.

What's the worst piece of advice you've ever received?

"Don't make that argument — no court will ever buy it."

TALENT

Leigh Brecheen
Brecheen Feldman

ARIZONA STATE U. COLLEGE OF LAW

With the dissolution of Bloom Hergott, Brecheen and five of her colleagues split off to form a new firm in 2020. "It was quite an adventure, especially with the pandemic," says the rep, who also was brokering Plan B's overall TV deal with Amazon and John Oliver's three-year *Last Week Tonight* renewal with HBO, the latter of which she says took nine months to hammer out. Now Brecheen — who also works with

Photographed by **Martha Galvan**

supportive of my whole life and helping me succeed in what I was trying to do, both in the workplace and as a mom.”

The native of Chicago suburb Glen Ellyn attended UCLA law school, graduating in 1995 with no major interest in entertainment (“I knew I didn’t want to go to court”) and a diminished tolerance for cold climates. “I made it through one winter,” says Freeman of returning to Chicago after law school. Working in corporate transactional law there, helping companies secure credit, would prove valuable experience for her move to Hollywood, though her clients couldn’t have been more different. “One that was memorable was a meatpacking plant,” she recalls. “It was the Midwest.”

She moved back to snow-free L.A. and into film financing at O’Melveny & Myers, where she worked with major studios including Disney and HBO, the latter of which would become her employer for more than a decade.

In 2016 she was tapped as the general counsel for one of the town’s oldest studios, MGM, responsible for a library that includes *Gone With the Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz*, James Bond and *Rocky*. Freeman now oversees a team of 85 during a major transition, after the studio exited bankruptcy and acquired Mark Burnett’s

UAMG, beginning its foray into television. “It’s one thing when you are an outside counsel and you do the deal, but once you are in-house at a company you have to manage the aftermath,” says Freeman, who shortly after joining MGM shepherded the company’s acquisition of Epix, buying out Paramount and Lionsgate, and later helped relaunch storied studio label Orion.

Even as the pandemic shuttered production and exhibition, Freeman and her team remained busy assisting recently installed film head Michael De Luca with a splashy slate that includes a Lady Gaga-starring *House of Gucci* and a Ryan Gosling space epic. She also helped guide 007 through COVID-19, adjusting the release strategy for Bond feature *No Time to Die*. She says, “The first priority was to do what was in the best interests of the film and the franchise.” And, as Hollywood eases out of the throes of the pandemic, things are not likely to slow down — especially with a much-reported sale to Amazon on the horizon, which the lawyer couldn’t discuss.

So, while Freeman didn’t set out to have a career in the entertainment industry, she has certainly found her place within it. “You don’t always have to take a direct path to reach your goal,” she says. “You just have to keep pushing forward.” **TJR**

Jenny McCarthy, Mel Gibson and Rob Delaney — is in the middle of restructuring Conan O’Brien’s joint venture with WarnerMedia, which will include a weekly variety show on HBO Max.

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... “Random encounters with clients and colleagues where you just have a friendly chat.”

LITIGATION

Andrew Brettler Lavelly & Singer

BROOKLYN LAW SCHOOL

What do Armie Hammer, Joss Whedon and Chris D’Elia have in common? They all turned to Brettler when facing career-jeopardizing allegations. “It’s never a good day for my clients if they need to talk to me,” says Brettler. Much of his work, including some plaintiff-side matters for survivors of assault and domestic violence, happens out of the spotlight. He adds, “I’ve never been busier in my career than I have been during the pandemic.”

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... “Having to find new uses for all of my ties.”

TALENT

Stephen Clark Lichter Grossman

UC HASTINGS COLLEGE OF THE LAW

Clark, who works mostly with behind-the-camera talent, made an industrywide stir when, as part of

Rian Johnson and Ram Bergman’s team, he made the whopping \$469 million deal for *Knives Out 2* and *3* with Netflix. “A deal like that comes along once in a career,” says the father of 18-year-old triplets. Johnson and Bergman’s busy T-Street also keeps him hopping with an incubator at MRC, TV projects and Netflix’s adaptation of Chinese novel *Three Body Problem*. Just as busy is another powerhouse duo, George Clooney and Grant Heslov of Smokehouse Pictures, who wrapped production on drama *Tender Bar* for Amazon, renewed their deal with MGM and set their sights on 1930s rowing drama *Boys in the Boat*, while Clooney separately closed a deal to reunite with Julia Roberts for *Ticket to Paradise*. Rising client Shay Hatten found his *Army of the Dead* follow-up while Ti West shot a movie for A24.

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... “Watching my kids play sports.”

CORPORATE

Robert Darwell Sheppard Mullin

GEORGETOWN LAW

Darwell continues his four-year partnership with Amazon Studios, this year locking in hundreds of millions of dollars in first-look and overall deals with the likes of Donald Glover, Lizzo, Brad Pitt and Michael B. Jordan, as well as assisting with the

streamer’s move into international development and production (led by its big-ticket *Lord of the Rings* series). He also represented Doris Day’s estate in connection with Kaley Cuoco’s upcoming series based on the legend, and provided counsel to Nickelodeon and Disney Animation.

My new mantra is ... “Don’t just do it, overdo it.”

LITIGATION

Felicia Davis Paul Hastings

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

Barely a decade out of law school, Davis has already established herself as a go-to guru in one of employment law’s hottest areas — pay equity. She regularly counsels companies about best practices on this front, and when her clients are sued, she’ll defend them in court, as she’s doing for Disney in a major class action brought by the company’s female workers. Davis also conducts investigations and was recently tapped to lead a probe over alleged misconduct at The Lincoln Project.

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... “Dodgers games and concerts at the Hollywood Bowl!”

TALENT

Warren Dern Sloane Offer

SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL

Client Zack Snyder is back in action

with his *Justice League* cut on HBO Max and the Netflix zombie flick *Army of the Dead*. Todd Phillips struck a deal to co-write the next *Joker* installment, while Amy Poehler is booming in the DIY space with *Making It* and planned spinoff *Backing It*. Paul Feig is directing the star-packed *School for Good and Evil* at Netflix, while J.A. Bayona has begun shooting Amazon’s high-profile *Lord of the Rings* series.

The NFT I’d buy in a second is ... “If I were a big sports fan, one of the basketball ones. But I’m not a big sports fan, so I probably wouldn’t.”

CORPORATE

Ken Deutsch

LATHAM & WATKINS

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Deutsch’s forte is the slate financing deal — linking up independent producers with studio capital to bankroll a package of films — like last year’s co-financing and distribution agreement between New Republic and Paramount Pictures for a 10-film deal including *Mission: Impossible 7* and *Top Gun: Maverick*. Deutsch’s ability to remain calm and casual — his post-COVID goal is to “eliminate dress shirts from my closet forever” — amid marathon negotiations has made him the go-to guy for indies looking for reliable access to capital.

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... “Cabo!”

LITIGATION

Scott Edelman Gibson Dunn

BERKELEY LAW

Edelman scored a huge victory for AMC last July when an L.A. judge issued a favorable post-trial ruling in Robert Kirkman’s profits battle over *The Walking Dead*. His successful year also included extinguishing a \$100 million lawsuit against Universal Music over master recordings destroyed in a massive studio backlot fire, batting down libel claims against MSNBC’s Rachel Maddow after she described a conservative news channel as “Russian propaganda,” and being inducted into the highly exclusive International Academy of Trial Lawyers.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... “Focusing me on the fact that a busy life is not necessarily a meaningful life. Was nice to spend more time at home with family.”

TALENT

Craig Emanuel Paul Hastings

MONASH UNIVERSITY LAW

As if handling Ryan Murphy’s ever-expanding content empire weren’t a full-time job on its own, Emanuel manages to advise a host of other busy writer-producers. He repped Tony Gilroy in his negotiation with Lucasfilm to run the new Diego Luna-led *Star Wars* series.



Brecheen



Brettler



Clark



Darwell



Davis



Dern



Deutsch



Edelman



Emanuel

He crafted the deals for *Lion* scribe Luke Davies to pen Tom Hanks' Apple feature *News of the World* and the upcoming Woody Harrelson-led Timothy Leary miniseries *The Most Dangerous Man in America*. And he set up George Wolfe's pact to helm *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* for Netflix. On the horizon for his clients: Charles Randolph's Wuhan project, Craig Rosenberg's *The Boys* spinoff and Robert Rodriguez's *Spy Kids* reboot.

What's the power lunch spot you can't wait to get back to?
 "Craft in Century City. I love this restaurant not only because the food is great and it's walking distance from my office, but it is also a place where the staff are incredibly nice and the tables are sufficiently spread out that you can have a conversation without being heard by the people next to you."

TALENT
Jeff Endlich
Morris Yorn

CARDOZO SCHOOL OF LAW
 Endlich helps client Taika Waititi navigate the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the galaxy far, far away and the high seas, setting up a third *Thor* film, a *Star Wars* stand-alone feature and HBO Max pirate comedy *Our Flag Means Death*. Endlich, whose client list includes *BoJack Horseman* creator Raphael Bob-Waksberg and comedian Adam Carver, also brokered *Dead to Me* creator Liz Feldman's Netflix overall deal and Chris McKay's jump into the Universal monster movies with *Renfield*. And, while all this work can be done remotely, Endlich notes, "We didn't get into this business so we could stay put in our houses."

TALENT
Jamie Feldman
Lichter Grossman

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL
 With the help of Feldman, Barry Jenkins and the Safdie brothers both inked novel pacts with two studios — A24 and HBO — under one first-look TV deal. The production shutdown meant a boon in development for his writer-director-producer clients like Steven Soderbergh, Chris Terrio and Marc Webb, making the past year one of the busiest of Feldman's career. "People are quicker to the deal," he says of COVID-era negotiations. "It's like, 'Hey, I can smell dinner. Let's see if we can do this in two rounds.'"

TALENT
David Fox
Mayan Greenspan

WESTERN STATE COLLEGE OF LAW
 There's been no shortage of work for Fox, whose producer, filmmaker and writer clients kept him burning wicks on all ends. Filmmaker James Wan had three producer deals that needed to be renegotiated as part of HBO Max's 2021 day-and-date strategy, on top of a deal to direct *Aquaman 2*.

Dan Lin's Rideback made a term deal with Universal while Michael Sugar's Sugar23 proved to be a 360 company with film, TV, podcast, publishing and other deals. *The Witcher* creator Lauren Schmidt Hissrich signed an overall deal with Netflix, while Thomas Bezucha signed on to direct episodes of Marvel's *Secret Invasion*.

What's the biggest effect of packaging coming to an end? "Fewer arguments at the dinner table." (His wife is a TV agent.)

TALENT
Melissa Fox
Hansen Jacobson

PENN LAW
 Fox's roster reads like a hot list of Hollywood's top comedy stars. She did the deals for Ali Wong to star in A24 dramedy *Beef*, which Netflix landed after a major bidding war, as well as the show *Paper Girls* for Amazon — both of which are on top of the new comedy special she'll soon be taping for Netflix. Fox helped Julio Torres set up the next season of his HBO series, *Los Espookys*. The rep — who also advises Michelle Wolf and Hasan Minhaj — has become somewhat of a *Saturday Night Live* whisperer, with clients including Kate McKinnon, Leslie Jones and Michael Che, who just launched *That Damn Michael Che* on HBO Max. Fox, who first took an interest in comedic talent when she interned at 3 Arts in New York in college, also reps Anna Konkle and Maya Erskine, who put out the second season of their critically acclaimed Hulu show *PEN15*. **The pandemic changed my work life forever by ...** "Giving everyone in the world my cellphone number."

TALENT
Jeff Frankel
McKuin Frankel Whitehead

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW
 Long-term relationships typify Frankel's client list with a noticeable lack of "one-off" deals. "We have clients for their whole careers," he notes. Examples include Zach Levi, who's in *Shazam! Fury of the Gods*; Sam Esmail, who's writing and directing Netflix's *Leave the World Behind*, which reunites Julia Roberts and Denzel Washington; and Willam N. Collage, whose spec script *Emancipation* resulted in the largest film festival acquisition deal in movie history (worth a reported \$120 million all-in) when it sold to Apple with Will Smith attached. **What's the worst piece of advice you've ever received?** "Don't be so bullish about Netflix because anybody can start a streaming service."

LITIGATION
Bryan Freedman
Freedman & Taitelman

UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC
 One of Hollywood's key litigators to call in a high-profile crisis, Freedman



Endlich



Feldman



D. Fox



M. Fox



Frankel



Freedman



Galsor



Gardner



B. Gellman



G. Gellman



Gender



Genow



Gilbert-Lurie

is currently representing *The Bachelor's* Chris Harrison after the host stepped away from the franchise following a controversial interview with former *Bachelorette* star Rachel Lindsay, and DC Films president Walter Hamada and producer Jon Berg in connection with *Justice League* star Ray Fisher's statements about their involvement in a toxic work environment. In September, Freedman's client Gabrielle Union reached a settlement with NBC after she alleged racism on the set of *America's Got Talent*. The theme of his past year? "Protecting the executive or the talent or the individual against the company," Freedman says, which, ideally, is "the way that you can try and drive change in a [company's] behavior."

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... "Having to learn how to change the paper in the printer."

TALENT
Matt Galsor
Greenberg Glusker

COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL
 Galsor found himself navigating complicated theatrical and streaming waves thanks to big-name clients who bounced back and forth between those two Hollywood worlds. He made sure Anthony and Joe Russo were properly compensated for directing and producing *The Gray Man*, Netflix's most expensive movie ever, then made a theatrical deal with Universal for the duo's *Electric State*, then back to Netflix with a producing deal for *Extraction 2*. Meanwhile, Chris Hemsworth got a deal to star in *Extraction 2*, then followed with a deal to star in *Furiosa*, which will be a theatrical release from Warners, then back to Netflix for sci-fi thriller *Escape From Spiderhead*. Says Galsor of switching gears repeatedly, "The finances are very different and need different kinds of approaches." Elsewhere, Vin Diesel got a 360 arrangement that saw him join video company Studio Wildcard as president of creative convergence and will work on a sequel to hit *Ark*, give his likeness to it, and develop an animated series. If all that weren't enough of a challenge, there's long-time client Tom Cruise, who decided he wanted to make a movie in space. **What's the power lunch spot you can't wait to get back to?** "Hinoki and the Bird in Century City."

TALENT
Jonathan Gardner
Cohen Gardner

U. OF VIRGINIA SCHOOL OF LAW
 One of Gardner's more complex deals saw client Ryan Coogler and his Proximity banner sign an exclusive TV deal with Disney, involving several divisions, including Marvel, and multiple distribution platforms. A Gardner specialty is working with filmmakers on the festival circuit

— at this year's Sundance, he repped producer Nina Yang Bongiovi in a \$16 million Netflix acquisition for racial drama *Passing*, and Megan Park's *The Fallout* was nabbed by HBO Max at SXSW — and it's something he's missed this past year. "Look, we all did our best with Zoom, but it's not the same thing. We can't even pretend it is," says Gardner, who also made a deal to bring Bong Joon Ho's *Parasite* universe to TV. "Walking down Main Street at Sundance and running into a colleague or hearing filmmakers on panels, plus the glamour ... With COVID it was all gone. I missed it a lot." **What's the biggest effect of packaging coming to an end?** "It levels the playing field for various agencies and management companies."

TALENT
Bruce Gellman
Hansen Jacobson

BERKELEY LAW
 Gellman spent much of the year advising his showrunner clients with major overall deals. That includes Dan Fogelman (*This Is Us*) at 20th Century Fox Television, Jennie Snyder Urman (*Jane the Virgin*) at CBS Studios and Adam F. Goldberg (*The Goldbergs*) at ABC Studios. He also negotiated a new pact for *Empire* alum Ilene Chaiken at Universal TV as she moved from the helm of Showtime's *The L Word* to NBC's *Law & Order: Organized Crime*. Also on his roster: *Snowfall*'s Dave Andron, *Wheel of Time*'s Rafe Judkins and Jennifer Yale, who will showrun J.J. Abrams' upcoming HBO Max drama *Subject to Change*. **What's the power lunch spot you can't wait to get back to?** "Nate 'n Al's."

TALENT
Gregg Gellman
Morris Yorn

LOYOLA LAW SCHOOL
 "There are new business models emerging," says Gellman, who helped longtime client Kenya Barris engineer one of his own. The writer-producer exited a rich Netflix pact early in order to launch a studio with ViacomCBS, acting as both head creative and an equity partner. "The business is evolving and COVID, in some respects, may have helped that evolution along." *WandaVision* and *Falcon and the Winter Soldier* recently proved massive hits for Disney+, and Gellman negotiated showrunner Jessica Gao's deal for one of Marvel's next splashy series: *She-Hulk*. **The thing I missed most during 2020 is ...** "Trust in humanity."

TALENT
Michael Gendler
Gendler & Kelly

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW
 Gendler's roster of top-tier showrunners includes Alex Kurtzman, who alone is juggling more than a half

Illustrations by Sam Peet



THR's Legal Legends

From advocating for clients to avoiding crisis, the accomplishments of these 10 attorneys have earned them lifetime legend status

Harold Brown

Gang Tyre

In the mid-1980s, Brown cut an unprecedented theme-parks pact for Steven Spielberg with Universal, and more than 30 years later the helmer is still a client — along with Robert Zemeckis, Michael Mann, George Miller and Dwayne Johnson.

Joseph Calabrese

Latham & Watkins

Calabrese spent most of his career at O'Melveny & Myers, becoming one of the industry's top gurus in M&A and finance, before making a stirring move to Latham & Watkins in 2014. Over the years, he's repped everyone from the International Olympic Committee to Legendary Pictures and pro sports teams.

Patti Felker

Felker Toczek

Felker knows how to fight for clients. In 2016, Emmy Rossum wouldn't return to *Shameless* unless she was paid full parity. In Felker's early years, agents would send her clients who were women, LGBTQ or people of color, whom they didn't necessarily view as high-worth. "I am beyond grateful," says Felker, who's repped Vin Diesel since before his *Fast & Furious* days. "It made me a fighter for people who were underrepresented."

Sam Fischer

Ziffren Brittenham

From negotiating a new season of *Friends* while sitting in an empty bathtub at 3 a.m. in a New

York hotel (he didn't want to wake his wife) to an introductory Oval Office meeting with then-President Barack Obama, Fischer's career is replete with iconic moments and clients, like the Obamas' Higher Ground, *Friends*' Kevin Bright, Marta Kauffman and David Crane, *Modern Family*'s Steve Levitan and *The Office*'s Greg Daniels.

Craig Jacobson

Hansen Jacobson

Jacobson's early days with partners Tom Hansen and Walter Teller were "like the Three Musketeers." His marquee deals include representing 3 Arts from inception to its sale to Lionsgate and William Morris in its merger with Endeavor. He's worked with Jeff Goldblum long enough to broker deals for the original *Jurassic Park* and the rebooted films, while also repping Sam Raimi and Donna Langley.

Dale Kinsella

Kinsella Weitzman

Over 35 years, Kinsella has represented some clients for just a day and others for nearly a decade. Though Farrah Fawcett was in the former category, she's one of his most memorable. "Being a very young lawyer, it was like, 'Oh my God, I'm going to be representing Farrah Fawcett.'" That type of thrill never got old. Fast-forward to five or six years ago, and he and Sean Connery killed time during a break from a mediation talking about *From Russia With Love*. In the middle, there's been Frank Darabont's

long-running (and still ongoing) fight over *Walking Dead* profits.

Mickey Mayerson

Paul Hastings

Mayerson has been something of a Forrest Gump over the decades, popping up during key moments in Hollywood history. One of his first tasks was placating Stanley Kubrick during the making of *Full Metal Jacket*. He later repped another legend, Warren Beatty. Perhaps the most pivotal deal was one between client Ryan Kavanaugh and Ted Sarandos that created the SVOD window.

Kenny Meiselas

Grubman Shire Meiselas & Sacks

After landing his first superstar in a young Sean Combs (then Puff Daddy), Meiselas has gone on to represent some of the biggest names in music, including The Weeknd, Lady Gaga and Lizzo, with Whitney Houston and Rick Ross along the way.

Bob Myman

Myman Greenspan

Myman was a litigator when he became friends with aspiring actor John Ritter, who convinced him to become his lawyer. Shortly after *Three's Company* debuted in 1977, Myman and another attorney formed their own firm with borrowed desks. He's gone on to rep the likes of Billy Bob Thornton, Damon Lindelof and Angela Lansbury.

Alan Wertheimer

Jackoway Austen

With an instinct for creative mojo, Wertheimer has guided clients through Sundance bidding frenzies (Scott Hicks' *Shine*) and the WGA strike. Longtime clients include Nicole Kidman, Gary Ross, Sigourney Weaver and J.J. Abrams.

Previous inductees:

Jake Bloom, John Branca, Skip Brittenham, John Burke, Melanie Cook, Jay Cooper, Bert Fields, John Frankenheimer, Patty Glaser, Allen Grubman, Tom Hansen, Barry Hirsch, Jim Jackoway, Neville Johnson, Ken Kleinberg, Linda Lichter, Sky Moore, Don Passman, Lee Phillips, Bruce Ramer, Marty Singer, Larry Stein, Ken Ziffren and the late Howard Weitzman

a dozen series including one he's showrunning in London (Showtime's *The Man Who Fell to Earth*). David E. Kelley has his next collaboration with Nicole Kidman, *Nine Perfect Strangers*, in the pipeline at Hulu. Shonda Rhimes saw *Bridgerton* quickly become one of Netflix's most watched shows ever as she readies a host of other hotly anticipated projects. And Steve Martin is making his debut as a television creator with Hulu's buzzy *Only Murders in the Building*, in which he'll also star. That's all on top of the feature deals Gendler brokered for clients Chris Pine (*Dungeons & Dragons*) and Meryl Streep (Adam McKay's *Don't Look Up*).

What's the biggest effect of packaging coming to an end? "We don't have to talk about it anymore."

TALENT

Rick Genow

Goodman Genow
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

As tentpole *Mulan* became the first Disney film to head to streaming, Genow guided producer Chris Bender through a deal fit for these unprecedented times. He also assisted such A-list talent as Henry Golding and Meghan Markle through the uncertainty. Genow won't comment on Markle's busy year, but announced pacts include those under both the Archewell production banner (Netflix, Spotify) and foundations (World Central Kitchen, Loveland Foundation). To get it all done, Genow co-opted the backyard treehouse as a temporary office (see page 86). He says with a laugh, "[It's] cedar-sided, has Wi-Fi, electricity and a great view."

The NFT I'd buy in a second is ...

"A viral video of Biden taking the oath [of office]."

TALENT

Cliff Gilbert-Lurie

Ziffren Brittenham
BERKELEY LAW

Like many reps, Gilbert-Lurie spent much of 2020 navigating COVID-related issues for his clients. Thanks to the widespread production shutdown, that meant renegotiating part of megaproducer Dick Wolf's massive overall deal with Universal Television. "There's not a day in my life that I'm not doing something related to the Wolf deal," says the rep. He also had to revisit Sandra Bullock's contract for her upcoming Netflix film *The End Is Forgiven*, which stopped and started during the pandemic, as well as Tina Fey's *Girls5eva* for Peacock. "I had these large overall deals pending for all these companies and, with all of them, you had to deal with the implications of COVID," says Gilbert-Lurie.

What's the worst piece of advice you've ever received?

"Around 15 years ago, a very senior and knowledgeable person in our

industry told me I really should think about getting out of the television business.”

TALENT

Lev Ginsburg

Ginsburg Daniels Kallis
UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

Timothée Chalamet made his Super Bowl debut with a massive deal orchestrated by Ginsburg that saw the actor, who is also set for his first producing credit on Luca Guadagnino's *Bones and All*, play Edward Scissorhands Jr. in a Cadillac ad. LaKeith Stanfield's star keeps rising after an Oscar nomination for *Judas and the Black Messiah* and with a packed upcoming slate, including Netflix feature *Harder They Fall* and the new season of FX's *Atlanta*. Ginsburg notes the pandemic favored talent “whose businesses and personalities were nimble enough to quickly adapt and move forward.”

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... “Granting me the privilege of spending over a year with my kids all day, every day, before they go on to college.”

TALENT

Carlos Goodman

Goodman Genow
UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

Goodman is balancing his prolific roster of filmmakers and talent (add Jared Leto to the list) with running his relatively newly merged law firm. Christian Bale is starring in David O. Russell's new untitled film and will also appear in the next *Thor* installment. Elsewhere, Goodman helped strike the \$30 million Netflix deal for worldwide rights to Antoine Fuqua's *The Guilty*, starring client Jake Gyllenhaal. He also orchestrated deals with A24 for directors Darren Aronofsky (*The Whale*) and Alex Garland (*Men*), and other client Steve McQueen impressed critics with anthology *Small Axe*.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... “Allowing me to shave and shower at the end of the day.”

CORPORATE

Sophie Goossens

Reed Smith

PANTHÉON-ASSAS UNIVERSITY

Copyright and technology expert Goossens has a knack for innovation and first-of-their-kind content-based product launches, advising large media companies, content platforms and other clients in such fields as music and audio, streaming, video games, social media and NFTs on cutting-edge copyright issues, platform and ecommerce regulation, artificial intelligence, blockchain and pan-European licensing. A specialist of EU law, she also advises trade bodies and media clients regarding their government relations. Working across Paris and London, she taps into her fluency in

both common and civil law to deliver pan-European advice.

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... “Clubbing (preferably in Berlin).”

LITIGATION

Lynne Hermle

Orrick

UC HASTINGS COLLEGE OF THE LAW

Now in her 40th year of practice, Hermle has long been ahead of the curve thanks to her Silicon Valley base and practice specialty. A few years after becoming widely known thanks to her trial work defending the venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins from Ellen Pao's gender discrimination claims, she continues to do high-profile employment litigation work for the likes of Netflix and Twitter. She's lately been successful in stopping multiple class actions on the employment front.

My new mantra is ... “The same as the old mantras. ‘Stay Calm and Carry On,’ and, as Winston Churchill said, ‘If you're going through hell, keep going.’”

CORPORATE

Michael Hill

Covington & Burling

FORDHAM LAW

New York-based Hill quarterbacks deals for sports leagues and media and tech firms looking at complex commercial and corporate transactions that don't fit neatly into preexisting templates. He advised the NFL on its \$100 billion-plus rights pacts with CBS, ESPN/ABC, Fox, NBC and Amazon, and counseled clients on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacts their distribution agreements. Also among his clientele: MLB, NBA, NHL, MSG Networks and Epix.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... “Covering the business/business casual section of my closet in an inch of dust.”

LITIGATION

Shawn Holley

Kinsella Weitzman

SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL

When a Hollywood A-lister is accused of the unimaginable and wants to keep it quiet, Holley is often the lawyer who gets the call. The former public defender is currently representing Shia LaBeouf in a domestic abuse suit filed by his former girlfriend FKA twigs, and Tory Lanez, who pleaded not guilty to weapons charges in connection with an alleged Megan Thee Stallion shooting. “I represent people who have been accused of things that would ruin their brand, image, reputation, maybe life,” says Holley, who's a unique hybrid of criminal and civil attorney. “I have probably 10 cases right now of people who are dealing with false allegations that I'm trying to take care of.”

My new mantra is ... “It's not that I actually want to go, I just want to be invited.”

Photographed by **Chris Patey**





Darrell Miller was photographed May 12 with longtime client Angela Bassett, whose many upcoming projects include the *Black Panther* and *Mission: Impossible* franchises.

TALENT

Matthew Johnson
Ziffren Brittenham

NYU SCHOOL OF LAW

In addition to recruiting such in-demand clients as Tiffany Haddish and Donald Glover, Johnson negotiated Sacha Baron Cohen's deals for both *The Trial of the Chicago 7* and *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm*. Locking down legal liability for the latter was a lot easier than coordinating L.A.'s COVID-19 response, for which Johnson was tapped by Mayor Eric Garcetti to lead the business and philanthropic community efforts that raised \$65 million to assist Angelenos in the early months of the pandemic: "My days started super early and ended when I couldn't keep my eyes open anymore."

CORPORATE

Ivy Kagan Bierman
Loeb & Loeb

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

One of the industry's key reps handling guild and union matters for film, television and digital companies, Kagan Bierman helped clients shut down productions, then restart them, during the pandemic. Repping companies including the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, AMC Networks and Turner, the Loeb & Loeb partner analyzed guild agreements and individual contracts, worked on COVID-19 compliance issues and advocated for "compassion pay" (additional pay for workers employed during the pandemic). During a year of protest and injustice, she also continued assisting major brands with their corporate cultures: "You really can't expect employees to experience something in their communities or in the world and come in to work, even virtually, as if nothing has happened."

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... "Live music, which includes going to hear bands at music festivals and at various venues. Music is one of my major passions."

TALENT

Adam Kaller

HANSEN JACOBSON
WHITTIER LAW SCHOOL

An expert at negotiating deals across all facets of the industry, Kaller represents talent ranging from TV showrunners (Derek Haas, Prentice Penny), to actors (Josh Duhamel, Connie Britton), to podcasters (*Call Her Daddy's* Alex Cooper), to entrepreneurs and influencers (Emma Chamberlain, Hiram Yarbrow). Or as he puts it: "From Logan Paul to Ronan Farrow." Recent moves include making a deal for Steven Yeun coming off his Academy Award nomination for *Minari* to executive produce, and working Jane Lynch's deals on three projects (starring in *Bucktown*, hosting *The Weakest Link* and continuing on *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*).



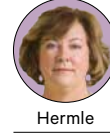
Ginsburg



Goodman



Goossens



Hermle



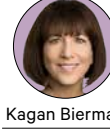
Hill



Holley



Johnson



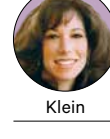
Kagan Bierman



Kaller



Kamin



Klein



Kohner

The NFT I'd buy in a second is ... "I have the answer, but I can't say it because I'm in the middle of creating it."

LITIGATION

Mitch Kamin
Covington & Burling

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Kamin says it was "particularly gratifying" to have been a key member of the legal team that, in December, won a halt to President Trump's executive order that would have effectively banned TikTok in the U.S. (The Biden administration is reviewing the case.) Currently, the commercial litigator is also heading up a team representing such major music labels as Sony, Universal and Warner, and publishers in copyright infringement cases against Charter Communications and Bright House Networks, and conducting an internal workplace culture review for a major entertainment company (which he can't name).

What's the power lunch spot you can't wait to get back to?

"Any place other than my kitchen."

TALENT

Deborah Klein

JACKOWAY AUSTEN
USC GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW

Klein's roster includes prolific talent like Toni Collette and Samuel L. Jackson, who set *The Last Days of Ptolemy Grey* at Apple and a Marvel series that starts this fall. Meanwhile, Jim Carrey sewed up a pact for a *Sonic the Hedgehog* sequel, while Will Ferrell, Paul Rudd and the female-centric production house Gloria Sanchez are making *The Shrink Next Door*, based on the popular podcast. Ferrell will also film a Christmas musical for Apple, while Rudd signed up for *Ant Man 3* and Linda Cardellini for a third season of *Dead to Me*.

My new mantra is ... "What's on DoorDash?"

TALENT

Alex Kohner

MORRIS YORN
LOYOLA LAW SCHOOL

Kohner set up award-winning author Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom* with Scott Free productions. Meanwhile, John Cho is starring in *Cowboy Bebop*, and Pete Chiarelli is writing the *Crazy Rich Asians* sequel. After working out a nine-figure deal for the Duffer brothers at Netflix, Kohner helped the duo (who are currently shooting season four of *Stranger Things*) put together *Talisman* with Stephen King and Steven Spielberg. "It's pretty amazing to represent [the Duffers], who came from nothing, who idolized these guys, and the *Talisman* is one of their favorite projects, and here they are making it for Netflix. That just makes me smile."

'THERE IS AN ASSUMPTION OF WRONGDOING'

In the digital era, gossip sites, aggregated news coverage and social media firestorms cause explosive allegations to spread like wildfire, creating headaches for the attorneys tasked with defending the accused

By Tatiana Siegel

In early January, an anonymous poster began publishing screenshots of text and direct messages apparently involving Armie Hammer on an Instagram account dubbed HouseOfEffie. The contents were graphic and embarrassing, featuring the *Social Network* actor musing about cannibalistic and rape fantasies. Soon thereafter, another equally mysterious Instagram account called deuxmoi began amplifying HouseOfEffie's posts to its much larger following, which is close to 900,000 and includes a number of influential journalists. Given the current media ecosystem, in which social media tsunamis often spawn mainstream news coverage, it didn't take long for reputable outlets to begin publishing stories about Hammer even though it was unclear at that time who was behind the HouseOfEffie blitz and if the messages were genuine.

For attorneys who represent the accused in the post-#MeToo era, Hollywood gossip purveyors like deuxmoi and the website CrazyDaysAndNights — which covers a similar terrain of celebrity sex lives, albeit with a more QAnon-esque everyone-is-a-pedophile vibe — have made their jobs far more challenging. It's difficult to respond to an anonymous claim made alongside such fine print as "statements made on this account have not been independently confirmed" (deuxmoi) and "the site publishes rumors, conjecture ... in addition to accurately reported information" (CrazyDaysAndNights). And, once it has seeped into the traditional news cycle, it can be too late to meaningfully counter.

"There is an assumption of wrongdoing just based on an accusation, even an anonymous one," says attorney Andrew Brettler, who represents Hammer as well as Alexander Payne, Chris D'Elia and Bryan Singer.

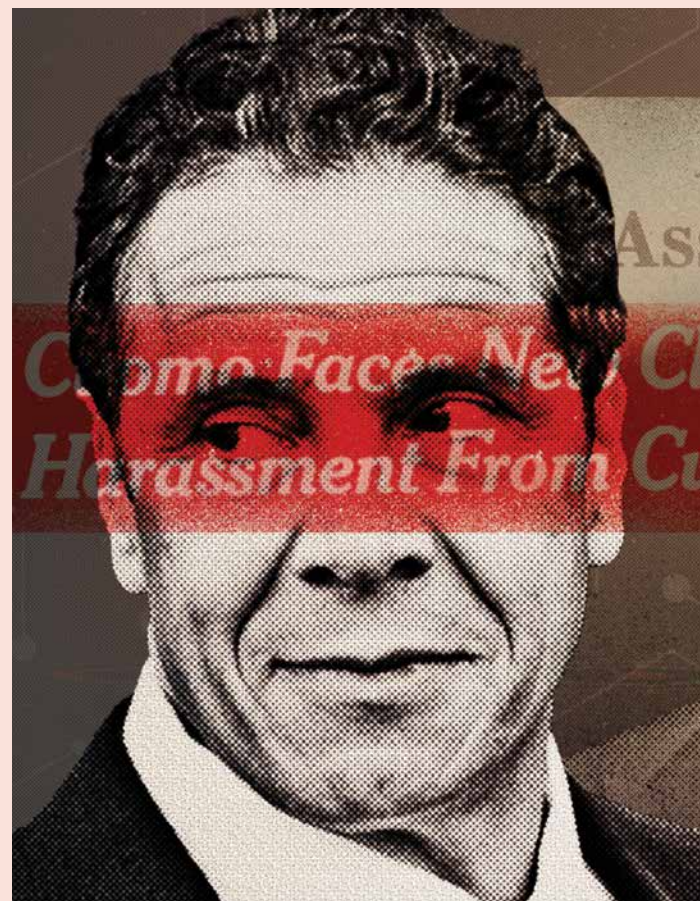
In Hammer's case, deuxmoi's early involvement inflicted the greatest amount of damage. The account, which is run by an anonymous woman who works outside the entertainment industry, started posting screenshots of additional text messages that Hammer purportedly sent to other women without verifying the authenticity of those messages. Brettler says many of them were entirely fabricated.

Julie Shapiro, director of the Entertainment and Media Law Institute at LMU Loyola Law School, says celebrity rumor-mongering is as old as the silent picture. But the speed by which information spreads via social media in the digital era is a new concern, leaving attorneys playing whack-a-mole.

"Gossip and misinformation used against celebrities via [conduits] like deuxmoi may be true or not. The spreader of information does not care," says Shapiro. "They simply distribute the information knowing that the more scandalous it is, the greater chance it will go viral. Is it harmful? The anonymity of the internet makes these issues difficult to control, let alone litigate."

Despite the fact that there was no formal allegation of wrongdoing, Hammer was pushed out of Lionsgate's *Shotgun Wedding* and Paramount+'s *The Offer* and dropped

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and Melinda French Gates. News of his affair quickly went viral, and some sites emphasized his ties to Jeffrey Epstein.



by WME in quick succession. A woman using only the first name Effie later came forward during a March news conference with her attorney, Gloria Allred, and accused Hammer of raping her in 2017. A new media feeding frenzy ensued, rehashing the Instagram messages.

That prompted Brettler to approach many of the news sites that covered Effie's rape claim and ask them to include exculpatory text messages that might contextualize the relationship better, but the attorney found no takers. He settled for the *Daily Mail*, a news organization that followed the Hammer case prodigiously but is generally not considered trustworthy.

"Many media outlets don't want to be seen as blaming the purported victim or be seen as an apologist for the accused," Brettler adds. "Balance is key. If the press is going to report on accusations based on gossip or rumors on social media, then it needs to report both sides of the story."

Others working in the space say the mainstream media has become increasingly averse to providing both sides of a #MeToo story, even when presented with solid evidence that the accusations are likely false.

"I have had documents that prove something helpful to my client and not helpful to the accuser," says Shawn Holley, a former public defender who has represented a long list of Hollywood stars, "a document that is really substantive, explosive, uncontroversially authentic, but even still, nobody will touch it."



Alonzo Wickers, an attorney who often represents news outlets asserting First Amendment defenses in defamation cases, says journalists who are doing proprietary reporting typically do factor in that evidence. He says, “I feel like our clients bend over backward to include any kind of exonerating emails, text messages or things like that, which the accused believes will contextualize things.”

Failing to do that can amount to defamation by omission, says entertainment litigator Jill Basinger.

“There appears to be this construct right now that we shouldn’t be allowed to evaluate a claimant’s story critically in the way we would look at anything else critically,” she explains. “And the problem now is, as soon as you say, ‘Hey, there’s evidence out there. You don’t know the whole story,’ the response is, ‘You don’t believe women,’ and nothing could be further from the truth.”

For her part, Basinger is just as likely to take on a client who is doing the accusing as one who has been accused. She is now representing Lindsey Boylan, the first woman to claim that New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo sexually harassed her. The attorney says leaks and omissions can go both ways; Cuomo staffers leaked Boylan’s personnel file to reporters in the wake of her allegations.

Further obscuring matters is the fact that the majority of #MeToo stories that are published on mainstream sites do not feature original reporting and are simply aggregating another outlet’s work or someone’s

social media postings. Aggregated stories are typically written by less-seasoned staffers and undergo little to no legal review. The trickle-down effect means that salacious allegations are amplified, and the accused’s response is an afterthought or omitted altogether.

“There’s a very big difference between journalism and news aggregation,” says Wickers. “And I’m not sure that readers are always as sensitive to that difference as they should be.”

Recent Bill Gates exposés in *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* offer a stark reminder of that paradigm. Aggregated versions highlighted Gates’ inappropriate workplace conduct, which included an affair with a staffer, along with his relationship with convicted pedophile Jeffrey Epstein without providing the lengthy responses from Gates’ publicist that were published by the *Times* and *Journal*.

Ultimately, all the aggregated stories and social media postings on any given subject continue to snowball until there’s an avalanche that obscures the originating flake that started everything. Oftentimes, the damage is done — even if no civil or criminal penalties follow lurid allegations.

“People live in this world now of where there’s smoke, there’s fire,” Basinger notes. “But what people don’t realize is the smoke builds upon itself. You get an anonymous post on one of those internet sites. It’s picked up by somebody else. Now there are accusations. Then a reputable paper can say, ‘Hey, it’s been widely reported.’” **THR**

What is the worst piece of advice you’ve ever received?

“In 1997, I was an intern at Merrill Lynch and a stockbroker told me, ‘You’d be crazy to buy stock in Amazon. They don’t stand a chance against Barnes & Noble.’”

TALENT

Tara Kole Gang Tyre

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

As client Riz Ahmed toured the awards circuit for *Sound of Metal*, Kole helped his Left Handed shingle close a first-look deal with Amazon in late January. At the same time, she fielded an explosion of post-inauguration offers for Amanda Gorman, whom she has represented since the poet was in college. And Kole was hands-on in helping Chelsea and Hillary Clinton set up their production company, HiddenLight, and sell their *Gutsy Women* docuseries to Apple. She says she loves working with clients who are not only smart and talented but also “really trying to change the culture.”

What is the worst piece of advice you’ve ever received?

“A manager once told me not to represent women because they make half the money that men make. I took that as a challenge.”

LITIGATION

Michael Kump Kinsella Weitzman

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Kump scored a major win for clients the Duke and Duchess of Sussex when he sued a paparazzi agency for taking illegal photos of Harry and Meghan’s son, Archie, while they were staying at Tyler Perry’s Beverly Hills home. “We got the photos back, and they promised never to do it again,” says the attorney, who is also the go-to for the Kardashian-Jenner family, leading a fight with *Forbes* over Kylie’s billionaire status and an upcoming trial in a licensing dispute involving a cosmetics line.

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... “Going to court.”

LITIGATION

Adam Levin Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp

USD LAW

“There are very few lawyers who litigate in the same space that I litigate,” says Levin, who works with studios, networks and other companies on labor issues where creative expression intersects with civil rights. He’s currently representing Fox and Disney against discrimination claims brought by former *Simpsons* composer Alf Clausen and, in a case involving a news producer fired for plagiarism, CNN. Levin also worked on UTA’s lawsuit against the WGA alleging that its agent boycott was illegal; that came to a close in July when UTA became the first major agency to sign a deal with the guild.



Kole



Kump



A. Levin

My new mantra is ... “Cherish every hug, handshake and (in-person) hello. Abolish elbow bumps.”

TALENT
Bianca Levin
Gang Tyre

YALE LAW SCHOOL
Some of Hollywood’s most sought-after multihyphenates turn to Levin for their multipronged dealmaking. After raking in honors for debut *One Night in Miami*, actress-turned-helmer Regina King’s next directorial efforts, including comic book adaptation *Bitter Root*, are being structured by Levin. The rep also is charged with the difficult task of keeping Dwayne Johnson’s packed slate operational, from Netflix tentpole *Red Notice* to superhero feature *Black Adam* to Disney’s *Jungle Cruise*. Says Levin of pandemic dealmaking, “There are so many more permutations for feature releases to think through.”

What’s the power lunch spot you can’t wait to get back to? “San Vicente Bungalows.”

TALENT
Jared Levine
Morris Yorn

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL
Levine’s clients are behind the shows that became the bright spots of many a stay-at-home order, including *Ted Lasso* co-creator Bill Lawrence and *Schitt’s Creek* star Eugene Levy. He also prepped projects mid-pandemic, like Jordan Peele’s *Us* follow-up at Universal and Carter Bays and Craig Thomas’ *How I Met Your Mother* spinoff at Hulu. Along with getting back to the office, Levine is very much looking forward to the end of the battle between the agencies and the WGA: “I like working together as a team for my clients.”

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... “Socializing with friends and clients and going to sporting events.”

TALENT
Jamie Mandelbaum
Jackway Austen

NYU SCHOOL OF LAW
Last year saw Mandelbaum negotiate two major deals with HBO. The first resulted in massive pay raises for the *Succession* cast (Brian Cox and Nicholas Braun are clients of his). The second was for showrunner Michael Patrick King to revisit *Sex and the City*, with his reboot now in production at HBO Max. Meanwhile, the rep — who also works with such showrunners as *9-1-1*’s Tim Minear and *The Handmaid’s Tale*’s Bruce Miller — brokered a deal for actress Danai Gurira to not only reprise her role as Okoye in the upcoming *Black Panther* sequel but also in an origin spinoff series for Disney+.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... “Teaching me that I can be fully functional at the beach.”



B. Levin



Levine



Mandelbaum



Masuda



Matlof



McKuin



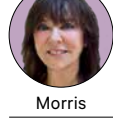
McNamara



Meigs Jr.



Miller



Morris



Moss



Mulcahy



Nelson

CORPORATE

Kevin Masuda
Gibson Dunn & Crutcher

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL
Masuda, who co-chairs his firm’s media, entertainment and technology practice group, is used to working with big names on complex deals. He advised LeBron James and Maverick Carter as they merged their SpringHill Entertainment outfit with their athlete empowerment firm Uninterrupted and brand consultancy Robot Co. for a new entity called The SpringHill Co. He also represented Arnold Schwarzenegger in a deal (with Genius Brands International) for the animated kids series *Stan Lee’s Superhero Kindergarten* and worked with Twitter boss Jack Dorsey’s mobile payment firm Square on a \$302 million deal for a majority stake in Jay-Z’s music streamer, Tidal, and with Indian movie major Eros International in its stock-for-stock merger with STX Entertainment.

My new mantra is ... “Don’t panic, adjust.”

TALENT

David Matlof
Hirsch Wallerstein

BERKELEY LAW
Matlof, whose client list includes Bill Skarsgard, Leah Remini and Maya Rudolph, is looking forward to some old-fashioned, in-person negotiations: “Negotiating via email doesn’t allow for much nuance or flexibility.” He’d know — his past year has been filled with virtual dealmaking, from shepherding a Netflix pact for longtime client Peter Berg to getting *Top Gun: Maverick* director Joseph Kosinski up and running on the streamer’s massive sci-fi swing *Escape From Spiderhead*.

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... “Travel. We were to have gone on safari in Tanzania.”

TALENT

Joel McKuin
McKuin Frankel Whitehead

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL
McKuin has plenty of big-name clients he could name-drop (Kristen Stewart, Noah Hawley and Sera Gamble, to name a few), but it speaks to his unpretentious nature that the client he’s particularly excited about was, until recently, an industry unknown: commercial cinematographer Morgan Cooper, the *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* fan who created a homemade trailer for a dramatic series reboot idea that went viral and caught the attention of Will Smith. The attorney brokered a two-season deal at Peacock to make Cooper’s dream series a reality. Says McKuin, “He’s a fresh voice, a very cool guy, and I’m pretty proud of that.”

What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever received? “Never let the client’s spouse turn on you.” I’ve seen it happen, and when it does, you’re done.”

LITIGATION

Elizabeth McNamara
Davis Wright Tremaine

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
The First Amendment may as well include the right to hire McNamara, whose courtroom advocacy helped Mary Trump’s tell-all book come out. A New York appeals court ruled in July that Donald Trump’s family couldn’t stop McNamara’s client Simon & Schuster from distributing it. Her ongoing plate of litigation includes defending Showtime from a suit brought by former Alabama judge Roy Moore over an appearance on Sacha Baron Cohen’s show *Who Is America?* as well as taking on the Internet Archive for allegedly infringing the copyrights on millions of books when the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered libraries nationwide.

What’s the power lunch spot you can’t wait to get back to? “I’m not a power lunch person. Soup suits me just fine.”

TALENT

John Meigs Jr.
Hansen Jacobson

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL
In July, Meigs became the first person of color promoted to equity partner at his firm, a deserved acknowledgment of his work, which this year included a five-year *Daily Show* extension for Trevor Noah and a new five-year overall deal with WarnerMedia for longtime client Issa Rae’s *HooRae* banner. Meigs also was among the coalition of Black industry professionals whose commissioning of an eye-opening McKinsey report on Black representation in February is, he hopes, just the beginning of an industry inclusion overhaul.

My new mantra is ... “It’s a high-class problem.”

TALENT

Darrell Miller
Fox Rothschild

GEORGETOWN LAW
Amid a nationwide reckoning over systemic racism, Miller worked to bring more Black-led art to screens. His negotiation of the NAACP’s multiyear deal with CBS includes the creation of a team dedicated to shepherding scripted, unscripted and documentary content from Black creatives. Longtime client Chris “Ludacris” Bridges will have a kids animated series with partners Mattel and Scholastic on Netflix (and he’s in *F9* in theaters, too), and Angela Bassett and Courtney B. Vance inked an overall production pact with ViacomCBS and starred in HBO’s adaptation of Ta-Nehisi Coates’ *Between the World and Me*.

TALENT

Marcy Morris
Jackway Austen

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW
Morris is a legacy builder and magnet for top female talent, from aiding

Kate Hudson as she expands her business empire, which includes her podcast *Sibling Revelry* and a starring role in Apple’s *Truth Be Told*, to a new relationship with Eva Longoria, whom Morris describes as “a force to be reckoned with.” She also represents the Herbert family in connection with the *Dune* franchise, which includes a planned two-part film adaptation of the 1965 novel.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... “I will never wear heels again.”

LITIGATION

Aaron Moss
Greenberg Glusker

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL
“I think it’s important to have fun with it,” says the litigator, who specializes in copyright law. This year, mere days before his client Discovery was set to air the documentary *The Lost Lincoln*, Moss beat an application for a temporary restraining order against the program. The doc aired as planned (and Discovery was let out of case). Moss also has won several legal victories on behalf of filmmaker Rian Johnson in a lawsuit brought by his former talent agent, who says he was entitled to commissions from the *Star Wars* franchise, and is defending Barstool Sports in alleged wiretapping and defamation cases.

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... “Going to concerts. I’d almost be willing to see Matchbox Twenty at this point.”

CORPORATE

Benjamin Mulcahy
DLA Piper

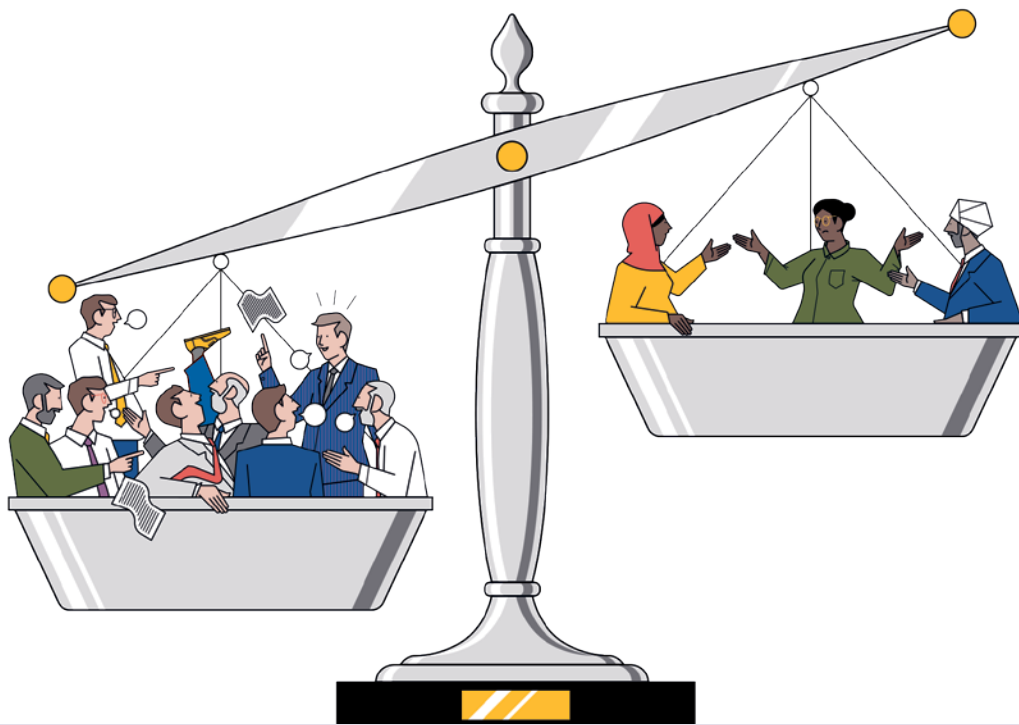
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Consistently a go-to attorney for high-profile sports and esports sponsorship and rights representation, Mulcahy recently made history by guiding Amazon Prime Video’s takeover of the NFL’s *Thursday Night Football* package. Worth \$1 billion annually, it was likened to the deal that put ESPN on the map in the 1980s. Mulcahy prides himself on his “ability to realistically assess and mitigate risk, differentiate between what’s legally relevant and what isn’t, and come up with strategies that enable [clients] to accomplish their business imperatives, often on especially tight timelines.”

The NFT I’d buy in a second is ... “Vial No. 1 of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.”

TALENT

Peter Nelson
Nelson Davis

UC HASTINGS COLLEGE OF THE LAW
Nelson had to revamp Allison Janney’s Netflix deal for *Lou* after production was waylaid by the COVID-19 crisis, while client David Duchovny, who hasn’t acted much lately, landed a lead role in Judd Apatow’s *The Bubble*.



WHY INCLUSION STILL LAGS IN HOLLYWOOD LAW

Implicit bias combined with an overreliance on social networks to find new hires means inclusion within the ranks of entertainment talent boutiques continues to be a struggle — even as clients begin to demand diverse representation

By Rebecca Sun

Nina Shaw has long stood as a tireless trailblazer and beacon of hope for diverse representation in Hollywood, but 30-plus years ago, when she was trying to break into L.A.’s talent law community, she felt as if she had to whitewash her résumé to get her foot in the door. The Columbia Law grad was already working in the entertainment group at O’Melveny & Myers, but every application for a new job was met with the same rejection: You don’t meet our qualifications.

“I didn’t understand how much who you knew mattered,” says Shaw. “It’s one of the issues you face if you’re not an insider: You don’t know it matters, and you don’t necessarily know anyone to refer you.”

So when she answered an ad in the trades from talent firm Dern Mason, she was counseled by friends to wipe any mentions of Black film and Black lawyer associations from her résumé and to find an excuse to conduct her initial interview over the phone. Shaw isn’t sure if those strategies helped her get hired, but that was the advice she was given to increase the odds.

There has been progress in diversifying the ranks but, like the entertainment and legal industries at large, the field remains disproportionately white and male. And the disparity within the talent boutiques is compounded by the insularity of the practice, one that’s reliant upon referrals and networks. “I grew up in Los Angeles but was not anywhere close or adjacent to the entertainment business, so I had no idea there were firms out there that represented talent,” says Hansen Jacobson’s John Meigs Jr., who was first exposed to the practice while working as an entertainment litigator at a big law firm early in his career.

“Right off the bat, if you have a firm that has very few people of color, it’s not as likely the people in the firm are going to have people of color in their social networks,” says Ziffren Brittenham’s Matthew Johnson, who adds that the lack of objective criteria in hiring is also a barrier. “A lot of it is based on whether it’s viewed that somebody will be a good fit. I don’t believe there’s a ton of explicit bias, but I do think there is implicit bias, and absent a real commitment to diversity, it becomes a real impediment.”

Venturing beyond one’s Rolodex is simply a matter of will, says Shaw. When her firm felt

it wasn’t getting enough Latino applicants, she and partner Abel Lezcano looked up top lawyers’ lists for Latino bar associations and started cold-calling people. “It wasn’t a matter of Latinx lawyers not wanting to be in entertainment law,” she says.

Attorney Jaia Thomas’ Diverse Representation also maintains a database of Black sports and entertainment lawyers across the country.

Another remedy is to adopt the Mansfield Rule: At least a third of the candidates for any given job must be from a historically underrepresented community. Gang Tyre has done it, but partner Annie Lee, who serves on the firm’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee, says retention is just as important: “What are you doing to create an environment where everyone feels welcome and has equal access to advancement?” she asks. “If you have someone at the table but they’re not getting to talk to clients or get in on the best deals, then [have you] really given them the opportunity?”

Because jobs are so coveted, boutique firms can get away with offering lowball entry-level salaries, which disproportionately affects lawyers from marginalized backgrounds. “A lot of people of color don’t have parents who can subsidize that below-market salary,” says Del Shaw associate Sloan Whiteside-Munteanu, who adds that law school debt has skyrocketed. Those who choose to take the job anyway “can’t afford to go out and network.”

Building a practice isn’t easy for any young attorney, but it’s harder without referrals from agents and managers, who also tend to rely on social connections. Johnson says attorneys of color sometimes are put in a box. He recalls a white agent lamenting, “I don’t represent many African Americans, so I don’t know if I can help you build your practice.”

It’s not uncommon for talent to reach out directly in lieu of a referral from their reps. “As an African American attorney, you overwhelmingly are getting those calls from clients, not the agencies or management,” says Fox Rothschild’s Darrell Miller.

But that is changing among the the next-gen set, says Whiteside-Munteanu: “Younger agents and managers of color are creating a coalition out here. We are actively referring people who are within these intersections.” Meigs adds clients under 35 also seem to prioritize having diversity on their teams. He says, “The younger they are, the more willing they are to exercise their power.”

With increasing demand for diverse representation, the pressure is on for firms to provide those advocates, but racial progress can’t be achieved by people of color alone — lawyers, clients or otherwise. “You cannot change the legal profession from the bottom up,” says Miller. “One or two [diverse hires] is usually an experiment, not a movement.” **THR**



Newman



Nickin



Offer

The attorney — whose other long-time clients include Peter Jackson and Edgar Wright — also represents Icelandic filmmaker Baltasar Kormákur. The helmer, who is now shooting *The Beast* with Idris Elba, was able to restart filming of volcano drama *Katla* for Netflix after instituting a raft of virus protocols.

My new mantra is ... “I’ve got a few. None of them are brilliant. Most people say ‘Stay safe.’ What I’ve actually used is, ‘Hang in there.’”

TALENT

Jeanne Newman**Hansen Jacobson**

USC GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW

Newman is “really, really proud” of how her clients weathered the COVID-19 crisis. In the past year, Stephen Lambert became one of the first to embark on a pandemic-era TV production with Fox’s *Celebrity Watch Party*; she also inked a new deal for Lee Daniels at Disney and signed *Grey’s Anatomy* and *Station 19* showrunner Krista Vernoff as a client. Says Newman, “Even though it’s been a painful time, a lot of hardship, there’s been a lot of opportunity as well.”

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... “Random conversations with strangers.”

TALENT

Amy Nickin**Frankfurt Kurnit**

WAYNE LAW

As Aaron Sorkin’s lawyer, Nickin had a year highlighted by *The Trial of the Chicago 7*’s awards-season acclaim. “I did my first negotiation for that film nearly 15 years ago,” she says, adding that Sorkin “never gave up on that vision.” The attorney, who also represents Melissa Benoist, John Goodman, Method Man, Dan Fogler and Ian Brennan, noted how heavy the pandemic weighed on reps. Says Nickin, “The seriousness of our jobs raised 1,000 percent because people’s lives and health were on the line, and their livelihoods.”

What’s the worst piece of advice you’ve ever received? “Dress the part.”

TALENT

Robert Offer**Sloane Offer**

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

Offer renegotiated deals for two of his Marvel Cinematic Universe stars — Benedict Cumberbatch (*Doctor Strange*) and Brie Larson (*Captain Marvel*) — for additional installments, while client Adam Driver spent the pandemic shooting four films. He also reps Ryan Gosling, who is filming the Russo brothers’ Netflix crime thriller *The Grey Man*, as well as Angelina Jolie, Tom Holland and Michael Bay.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... “Exchanging my jeans for sweatpants.”



WILL NEW MEDIA REVIVE OLD LABOR CONCERNS?

Writers and agents have made peace and the pandemic helped avert a potential strike, but there could be rough waters ahead as guilds prepare to take on streaming-era issues that leave talent ‘held off the market unable to work’

By Eriq Gardner



Two years after the war between writers and agents went nuclear, as David A. Goodman completes his final months as president of the Writers Guild of America West, he thinks about the moment the fight ended — when, in February, WME was the last talent agency in town to agree to sunset packaging and divest ownership in production entities. “It was COVID, I was at home,” says Goodman. “I probably had a few drinks. It was out of a sense of relief because, even though it was the guild that did this, I was leading it. I felt enormous responsibility to our members who wanted their agents back.”

Mass firings are supposed to be the thing that every union dreads and, in the annals of international labor history, very few breakthroughs have happened as a result of them. And yet, it worked in Hollywood. On April 22, 2019, more than 7,000 movie and TV scribes told their agents to take a hike and, ultimately, it got them what they wanted.

The WGA felt that in the drive for profits, agents had lost sight of who they were

supposed to be working for. And so the WGA cracked down on agencies that packaged talent together and took backend stakes in productions. It tried to time the conflict so it wouldn’t step on the collective bargaining agreement with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers that was set to expire the next spring.

Unexpectedly, the dispute with the talent agents dragged on and on and on. By February 2020, with the big four agencies yet to cave, Hollywood’s writers were being prepped for a second war — this one against their own employers. Be ready to strike, Goodman signaled to his troops. Anticipating walkouts, studios began stockpiling scripts.

The industry braced for two simultaneous labor battles, but then, in a matter of weeks, the plot moved quicker than a Tom Hanks drama. A novel coronavirus spread across the globe. Studios halted productions. Headlines warned of economic depression. And the industry zagged. One by one, the talent agencies gave in to the WGA’s demands. In turn, the writers, relatively fortunate to be able to do much of their jobs

DIRECTORS DEMAND SHOWDOWN
Give Producers Until Tonight To Accept Or Reject Proposed Pact; Producers Meet Today



Far left: Members of the Screen Actors Guild, with then-guild president Ronald Reagan (front right) in 1952. Left, from top: *THR* covered a directors strike threat in 1939; Louis B. Mayer, then the head of MGM, in 1933; the Warner Bros. studio in 1933.



REAGAN: GENE LESTER/GETTY IMAGES; MAYER: NY DAILY NEWS ARCHIVE VIA GETTY IMAGES; STUDIO: IMAGNO/GETTY IMAGES; GOODMAN: MICHAEL TULLBERG/GETTY IMAGES; CRABTREE: IRELAND; AMY SUBS/MANGETTY IMAGES

from home, backed away from marching in the streets against Hollywood producers. “You can’t go on strike during a pandemic,” says Goodman. “Here we were facing this economic catastrophe. I don’t think we could have asked our members to do that.”

On July 1, 2020, the WGA and AMPTP reached a deal that renewed for three years the master TV/theatrical agreement that sets forth basic wages and working conditions. (Other unions did the same.) The WGA achieved unprecedented parental leave benefits, while also scoring modest wage increases, but quite a lot about Hollywood’s rising streaming economy was left at the negotiating table — or, rather, on Zoom.

If it wasn’t entirely obvious last summer that skipping over problems brewing on the streaming front was unwise, it would become clear by the end of the year, when studios including Warner Bros. and Disney announced they’d be debuting some of their tentpoles on affiliated streaming services concurrently with a theatrical release. The pandemic sped up a long-anticipated shift in business models: the collapse of Hollywood’s windowing system. Nevertheless, “day-and-date” release announcements for movies like *Godzilla vs. Kong* and *Black Widow* caught talent off guard, with furious negotiations commencing among studios, actors, directors and others over a diminished box office.

“The union is always one step behind,” says Ronald Seeber, a labor relations expert who back in 2007, when writers went on

strike, was Jon Stewart’s first *Daily Show* guest to explain the situation. “To try to get people to act together on the basis of a future threat, even if you know it is a threat, is a very difficult thing.”

IN HOLLYWOOD, THERE’S AN ORIGIN STORY for just about everything, and the industry’s above-the-line unions are no exception. The WGA, SAG-AFTRA and the Directors Guild of America (plus predecessors like the Screen Writers Guild) all have lore that dates back to 1930s, when the industry was in the throes of the Great Depression. Stories involve secret meetings among some of the most famous individuals alive at the time. These pioneers were undoubtedly assisted by the 1935 passage of the National Labor Relations Act, which guaranteed the right of workers to engage in collective efforts to improve their working conditions.

In 1933, Louis B. Mayer, the head of MGM, called an emergency meeting where all the studio’s actors, directors, writers and stagehands gathered inside a large theater on the lot. Mayer told everyone that for the sake of the studio’s future, they would be taking a 50 percent pay decrease. Within months, it became clear two groups would escape pay cuts: studio executives and unionized craft workers (covered under the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees contract). “There was a realization that [everyone else] had been swindled,” says Miranda Banks, a film studies professor and the author of *The Writers: A History of American Screenwriters and Their Guild*. “This was definitely the moment when writers and actors understood there was a problem.”

That’s when the industry’s talent began plotting their unions — and when studios used the organization that puts on the Academy Awards each year as a vehicle to subvert their formation.

To fight off new unions like the DGA, the studios positioned the Motion Picture Academy as the entity that would ostensibly represent the interest of workers. In 1935, the studios tapped Frank Capra, who would later direct *It’s a Wonderful Life* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, to lead the Academy. He was supposed to be in the pockets of the studio bosses — but Capra surprised them by firmly standing behind the DGA. In 1939, to cajole the Motion Pictures Producers Association into negotiating, he threatened a boycott of that year’s Academy Awards as well as a strike among directors if the DGA wasn’t recognized within 24 hours. “DIRECTORS DEMAND SHOWDOWN,” was the screaming front-page headline in the Feb. 17, 1939, issue



Goodman



Crabtree-Ireland

of *The Hollywood Reporter*. The gambit ultimately worked. The directors’ first collective bargaining agreement established minimum salaries, two weeks of preparation time for movies budgeted at more than \$200,000, and the right to be consulted on the editing of their films.

Around this same time, the studios’ control over the labor supply would weaken significantly thanks to two (metaphorical) earthquakes that fundamentally transformed the industry. The first came when *Gone With the Wind* star Olivia de Havilland took on Warner Bros. for repeatedly extending her contract. The actress insisted she couldn’t be kept under contract for longer than seven years because of a California law that limited personal service terms to this duration. The studio maintained it could suspend her for refusing roles and her time under suspension didn’t count toward actual service. In 1944, a California appeals court sided with de Havilland. The judges recognized that actors would reasonably refuse demeaning roles that might destroy their popularity and interfere with further employment. To then hold them to “peonage or serfdom” would be unacceptable.

Then, in 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a major antitrust opinion in a case concerning the vast power held by studios that also controlled theaters. In *United States v. Paramount Pictures*, the high court reviewed how the majors were keeping independents out of the business and concluded that forcing divestitures was an appropriate remedy. Suddenly, there became space for producers distributing smaller films, which, in turn, meant more competition for the services of entertainment workers.

While those decisions helped secure the unions’ place in the entertainment economy, it’s how the industry pivoted in response that cemented it. Because the big studios had to become more responsive to what theaters and audiences wanted, companies including MGM, Warner Bros., Fox, RKO Pictures and Paramount began focusing on bigger-budget movies — and, since they were now making fewer films altogether, they began using their backlots to make TV shows.

With the television economy getting off the ground, thousands of new writers and directors — and tens of thousands of actors — needed representation. The ranks of the guilds exploded. When studio films started playing on television, the creators demanded to share in the spoils of downstream distribution. Thus came residuals. Says Catherine Fisk, a law professor at University of California, Berkeley, and the author of *Writing for Hire: Unions, Hollywood, and Madison Avenue*, “The guilds adapted to the dramatic change in business model by gaining the right to negotiate over TV.”

TODAY, NEARLY 75 YEARS AFTER THE collapse of the old studio system, production and distribution are again coming under the roofs of vertically integrated conglomerates. Netflix paved the path, but now hardly a month goes by without news that WarnerMedia, ViacomCBS, Comcast or Disney is putting its movies on an affiliated streamer or developing TV properties for its platforms. As if on cue, new battle lines are forming that recall old tensions.

For example, SAG-AFTRA is currently upset at how streamers like Netflix and Amazon Prime have been dithering on timely renewals or cancellations of shows, while effectively holding talent creatively hostage. According to research conducted by the guild, not only has the average number of episodes per season decreased in the past decade by 52 percent, but the median “hold” time on an actor’s services has increased 41 percent, or about two months.

“The growth in streaming media has dramatically upended how series regular performers work and severely harmed many of those performers in the process,” says SAG-AFTRA chief operating officer and general counsel Duncan Crabtree-Ireland. “The days of television seasons consisting of 20-plus episodes and returning on a



SAG-AFTRA is pushing California legislators to pass the FAIR Act, which would limit how long a contract can “hold” an actor’s services.

consistent schedule are gone. Now, seasons for most shows include far fewer episodes — often as few as seven or eight — and the time between seasons when actors are held off the market unable to work is both much longer and completely unpredictable.”

“Held off the market unable to work” was the same objection actors voiced when de Havilland challenged Warners. The union is pushing the California legislature to pass a bill called the FAIR Act, which would amend the seven-year-rule to place a 12-month hard time limit on the exercise of contractual options for an actor’s exclusive services. But, after entertainment companies reacted with fury and the MPA hinted at a lawsuit, the bill was pulled. The state lawmaker who sponsored the bill told SAG-AFTRA more public education was needed.

Regardless of the fate of the FAIR Act, it portends what’s coming in 2022 when a

three-year deal between Netflix and SAG-AFTRA is up for renewal. That 2019 pact was historic: the first time the streamer had done a direct deal with a guild. (Netflix is not a member of the AMPTP and doesn’t yet have a deal with the other unions.) The agreement recognized performance capture and dubbing as covered work, among its advances, and also reflected newfound priorities in the #MeToo era. For example, there’s now a ban on auditions for actors in private residences and hotel rooms.

While many in the industry assume there won’t be any other big labor negotiations until 2023 (when the pandemic-era AMPTP agreements expire), there’s always the possibility that streamers open talks with Hollywood’s above-the-line unions before then. “Any company that wanted to do a deal ahead of [2023] negotiations, we absolutely could,” says Goodman, who will finish his term in August. “The guild will talk to anybody about anything. But these are smart businessmen and businesswomen, and they are only going to make a deal if they see it is beneficial to them.”

The Biden administration could bring the friendliest terrain the guilds have ever fought on. In the U.S., about 12 percent of workers are unionized, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In Hollywood, it’s nearly everyone, even though workers largely operate on a project basis (making them susceptible to being labeled independent contractors) and typically have other representatives like agents and lawyers.

“A freelance economy works better when unions can provide continuity of employment, pension and health benefits, and can train highly skilled workers,” says WGA general counsel Tony Segall. “I’ve always said that if there weren’t unions, employers would have to invent them.”

It can also be said that unions have played a key role in the development of the business, providing a second look anytime Hollywood finds a new way to exploit its intellectual property. That was true back in the 1950s upon the birth of syndicated TV and remains so today in the digital era. For better or worse, when the guilds next negotiate the tough issues that have developed on this front, they’ll have the weight of history on their shoulders.

“We have this 600-page collective bargaining agreement, and it’s really hard to take stuff out of it,” says Segall, adding that it would be easier to start from scratch. “You could design a system that didn’t have a million different formulas and these weird historical oddities. It would be much easier to administer, but that never happens because it’s very hard to change things that are already in place.” **THR**

CORPORATE

Rick Offsay

Latham & Watkins
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

When the studios want to work together, Offsay is the guy working out the details. Major hookups include Warner Bros.’ 10-year home-entertainment joint venture with Universal, the MGM-Universal output deal — which covers upcoming James Bond film *No Time to Die* — and the pan-regional agreement between Latin American giants Univision and Televisa to create their Univision International distribution network. However tense the negotiations, Offsay likes to keep it cordial and remember “it’s a small town and we always meet again on another deal.”

The NFT I’d buy in a second is ...

“One that provides an exclusive viewing experience that is not available without buying.”

LITIGATION

Anthony Oncidi

Proskauer

U. OF CHICAGO LAW SCHOOL

Oncidi, who heads Proskauer’s Labor & Employment department, scored a big victory for Viacom with an injunction against Netflix that prohibits the streamer from continuing to poach Viacom’s executives. He also continues to represent the Recording Academy in its ongoing arbitration proceeding against former president and CEO Deborah Dugan after her widely publicized ouster.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ...

“Realizing that giving a cat a vigorous belly rub in the middle of the day does wonders to clear your head.”

LITIGATION

Kirk Pasich

Pasich LLP

LOYOLA LAW SCHOOL

COVID-19 has meant a lot of things to many people, but for one attorney who has spent almost four decades battling insurance companies, it’s sparked phone calls from nearly every corner of the entertainment industry. Pasich has already filed pandemic-related cases on behalf of ViacomCBS, United Talent Agency and producers making a Ben Affleck movie — and he says he’s got plenty more in the pipeline. When he’s not taking on insurers, Pasich runs the music label Blue Élan Records (Soul Asylum, The Rembrandts).

My new mantra is ...

“Paraphrasing Voltaire, ‘Let us not be guilty of the good things we did not do.’”

TALENT

Danny Passman

Gang Tyre

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

Passman did one of the most buzzy directing deals in recent history: Patty Jenkins following up *Wonder*



Offsay



Oncidi



Pasich



Passman

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The Hollywood Reporter Power Lawyers of 2021.

Ambassador Robert C. O'Brien,
mediator at Signature Resolution



Peikoff



Petrocelli

Woman 1984 with *Star Wars: Rogue Squadron* and becoming the first woman tapped to helm a *Star Wars* movie. But he's perhaps proudest of getting in early on the documentary boom, where he's repped filmmakers such as Jehane Noujaim and Karim Amer (*The Vow*). "I've always been interested in all lanes of the business," he says, "and I dove into documentaries early even though there wasn't a business model yet because I like contributing to the creation of new models."

What's the worst piece of advice you've ever received?

"Someone once told me, 'Stick to what you know.' That's a recipe for little growth, and no chance to become an expert in something new."

TALENT

Jodi Peikoff

Peikoff Mahan

CARDOZO LAW

Of the many challenges the past pandemic-ridden year has presented, Peikoff admits that embracing technology was at the top of her list. Luddite woes aside, she's been most proud of witnessing her clients — who include Tilda Swinton, Felicity Jones and America Ferrera — navigate "such a challenging, consequential and profound year with grace and kindness" and taking the steps to "challenge industry norms and systems that have ignored or perpetuated inequality for so long." One such client is Adrienne Warren, who besides earning a Tony nomination for *The Tina Turner Musical* and securing a record deal with a major label, also co-founded the Broadway Advocacy Coalition.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... "Confirming my belief that the work I do can be done from anywhere."

LITIGATION

Daniel Petrocelli

O'Melveny

SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL

There's maybe no one better at turning around a losing situation than Petrocelli, whose career is packed with achievements that seemingly had long odds. Among them: keeping Superman rights for Warner Bros. and representing former President Donald Trump in his uncharacteristic settlement over Trump University. What's next? He'll soon be defending Kesha at trial from Lukasz (Dr. Luke) Gottwald's defamation claims in a nearly seven-year-long dispute. Later, he'll be attempting to reprise the antitrust success he had defending the AT&T-Time Warner merger when he represents Google in connection with the government's claims that it has a monopoly in the ad tech space.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... "Allowing me to become conversant in new technology. I'm old school."



Top Music Dealmakers

With touring halted during the pandemic, these attorneys helped clients leverage streaming and sell catalogs

Jordan Bromley

Manatt Phelps & Phillips

In 2020, Bromley's team negotiated over \$1 billion in catalog sales — and, with clients Neil Young, Migos and Diplo, he helped secure benefits for entertainment workers and companies during the pandemic under the CARES Act.

David Byrnes

Ziffren Brittenham

Client Beyoncé released *Black Is King* for Disney+, winning a Grammy for best music video for one of its clips, "Brown Skin Girl." Byrnes also reps Blake Shelton, Travis Scott and the late Mac Miller.

Rosemary Carroll

Carroll Guido

Among Carroll's clients are The Strokes, who won a Grammy for best rock album, and Phoebe Bridgers, who recently started her own label, Saddest Factory.

David Eisman

Skadden

Eisman was involved in several of the splashiest music deals in the past year, including representing Shamrock Capital with its \$300 million acquisition of the masters of Taylor Swift's first six albums.

Damien Granderson

Granderson Des Rochers

Latin superstar J Balvin

signed a multifaceted new deal with Universal Music Group. Other clients include H.E.R., who took home a Grammy and an Oscar this year, A\$AP Rocky, Ne-Yo and J. Cole.

David Jacobs

Grubman Shire

"My jaw was just on the floor the whole time," says Jacobs of Lil Nas X's rollout of "Montero (Call Me by Your Name)." Other clients, like Kali Uchis and Ritt Momney, had their viral moments thanks to TikTok.

David Lande

Ziffren Brittenham

Beyoncé inked a deal with Peloton, while Travis Scott's Astroworld Festival, set for November, sold out in a day. Other clients include Shakira and Selena Gomez.

Dina LaPolt

LaPolt Law

Client Cardi B has an upcoming record, Offset will be a judge on HBO Max's competition series *The Hype*, and LaPolt has been inking NFT deals galore for deadmau5.

Doug Mark

Mark Music & Media Law

Mark counts as clients Atticus Ross, who just won his second Oscar; Billie Eilish, who dropped tracks and videos during the pandemic and is "just cooler than everybody else";

and her brother Finneas, who has produced for Justin Bieber.

James McMillan

James E. McMillan PC

Machine Gun Kelly built out his recording, touring and film business with the help of McMillan, who now reps YBN Nahmir, YBN Almighty Jay and Cordae.

Michael Poster

Michelman & Robinson

Poster also rode the music publishing purchases wave, making acquisitions of the Calvin Harris (estimated at \$100 million) and Sean Douglas catalogs for Vine Alternative Investments.

Berkeley Reinhold

Law Office of Berkeley Reinhold

In the live event space, Reinhold's recent projects include Global Citizen's Vax Live concert at SoFi Stadium. She also reps Marc Anthony and Spencer X, a beatboxer with 52 million TikTok followers.

Aaron Rosenberg

Myman Greenspan

Rosenberg struck deals to bring Ariana Grande to *The Voice* and Jason Derulo to Atlantic Records, as well as "everything in and around" Justin Bieber's new album — and he did John Legend's pact with Walgreens to promote COVID-19 vaccines.

Bobby Rosenbloum

Greenberg Traurig

Rosenbloum is a go-to for digital licensing, representing clients like Snapchat and Spotify. He also landed Major League Baseball as a client, along with the Quincy Jones-backed OneOf.

Debbie White

Loeb & Loeb

White's client list features K-pop supergroup BTS and internet giant Tencent, whose Tencent Music service has about 850 million users and is commonly called "China's Spotify." **VH1**



LATHAM POWER LAWYERS

Latham & Watkins congratulates all of *The Hollywood Reporter's* 2021 Power Lawyers including our colleagues:



Marvin Putman



Ken Deutsch



Rick Offsay

JOE CALABRESE – LEGAL LEGEND

And a special congratulations to our very own Hollywood Legal Legend, Joe Calabrese, on this prestigious recognition from *The Hollywood Reporter*.



Joseph Calabrese

CORPORATE

Robyn Polashuk
Covington & Burling

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

Co-chair of the firm's communications and media industry group, Polashuk is an expert in licensing and distribution of TV networks and programming. With a reputation for structuring precedent-setting deals, she's the person to call for thorny content distribution issues. She advised Univision on its \$800 million sale of a 64 percent stake to an investment group, and other big-name clients include Walt Disney, Fox Corp., NFL Network, PBS and Pluto TV.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... "Providing more opportunities to connect with clients in distant locations thanks to Zoom, Teams and other video platforms."

LITIGATION

Marvin Putnam
Latham & Watkins

GEORGETOWN LAW

A top trial attorney focused on entertainment and media, Putnam represented the embattled Hollywood Foreign Press Association in its legal fight, which was dismissed earlier this year with prejudice, against a Norwegian entertainment journalist who brought antitrust claims against the group. Working on behalf of the Association of Talent Agents, Putnam also played a major role in the Writers Guild's battle over packaging fees and additionally defended ICM in a related lawsuit brought by the WGA. (ICM and the WGA came to an agreement regarding the practice in August.) One of the accomplishments he's most proud of over the past year, however, is becoming a "company adviser on a truly daily basis" as content creators faced production shutdowns, restarts and insurance challenges during the COVID-19 chaos.

What's the biggest effect of packaging coming to an end? "The rumors of packaging's death are greatly exaggerated."

TALENT

Ken Richman
Hansen Jacobson

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Richman recently completed Elisabeth Moss' deal for her Apple limited series *Shining Girls* and negotiated showrunner and *Outlander* executive producer Ron Moore's move from Sony to Disney's 20th Television. Top client Mike Schur has numerous projects in various launch and pre-launch stages, including sitcom *Rutherford Falls*. Meanwhile, Richman renegotiated deals for Chris Mundy on *Ozark* and Alec Berg on *Barry*.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... "I may no longer be capable of working without my dog Chewbacca snoring beside me."

CORPORATE

Marissa Román Griffith
Akin Gump

STANFORD LAW SCHOOL

After helping MRC negotiate a pandemic pivot of the Issa Rae and Kumail Nanjiani rom-com *Lovebirds* to Netflix, Román Griffith's next coronavirus challenge is dealing with insurers that are requiring COVID exclusions on production insurance policies. One thing that's off her plate is unwinding The Weinstein Co.'s involvement with the nearly 200 library titles that client Portfolio Funding Co. acquired from TWC more than a decade ago. "It was quite an endeavor," says the attorney, who also represented Hello Sunshine in connection with a new credit facility and continues to work with banking behemoths JPMorgan Chase, MUFG and Comerica in their entertainment dealings.

What's the worst piece of advice you've ever received? "Don't worry, it's not that spicy."

TALENT

Nancy Rose
Schreck Rose

GW LAW

Rose is a rare triple threat in the showbiz legal community, straddling film, television and theater and striking A++ deals across all three mediums. Though Broadway was dark this past year, the New York-based attorney was plenty busy, renegotiating the deals for two Lin-Manuel Miranda films — the *Hamilton* live capture and *In the Heights* — to streaming exclusively for Disney+ and for a theatrical and HBO Max debut, respectively. The *Hamilton* deal broke ground given that it was the first to transition post-lockdown. She is now renegotiating another Miranda film, *Vivo*, which was slated for a June theatrical release from Sony and is now heading to Netflix. Other clients include Sarah Treem, Kevin James and Tony Kushner.

My new mantra is ... "Live simply."

LITIGATION

Mathew Rosengart
Greenberg Traurig

BOSTON COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL

Rosengart's pandemic year was quite unique thanks to star client Sean Penn, who began one of the nation's largest nonprofits tied to COVID-19 testing and vaccinations in disadvantaged areas. (Rosengart served as the NGO's general counsel.) The former federal prosecutor also represented *Shark Tank*'s Daymond John when the investor was accused of price gouging, Winona Ryder to block her testimony in long-ago boyfriend Johnny Depp's U.K. libel trial, and NBA superstar Jimmy Butler in a first-of-its-kind case concerning those in the sports world who procure entertainment work for athletes without an agent's license.

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... "Actually meeting clients in real life and physically being in court. Law is a tactile business, and while we were all able to work with Zoom, there is no substitute."

TALENT

Gretchen Rush
Hansen Jacobson

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

Hollywood's A-list women turn to Rush when it's time to make a deal. After the launch of Hulu's *Little Fires Everywhere*, the attorney negotiated a new contract extending Kerry Washington's producing pact at ABC Signature. She also brokered Jennifer Lawrence's deal to star in Adam McKay's film *Don't Look Up*, which went into production in the fall at Netflix. And on behalf of Reese Witherspoon's Hello Sunshine, Rush worked out two major co-studio deals for new series at Apple TV+, one of them, Veronica West's *Surface*, starring her client Gugu Mbatha-Raw, and the other, *The Last Thing He Told Me*, a limited series starring Julia Roberts.

What's the biggest effect of packaging coming to an end? "We haven't gotten to the third act yet when it comes to the end of packaging."

CORPORATE

Faiza Saeed
Cravath, Swaine & Moore

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Corporate law standout Saeed has guided Hollywood clients through the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age and is the lawyer industry folks want in the dealmaking foxhole with them. For example, she helped Jeffrey Katzenberg and Meg Whitman's startup Quibi wind down and find a home for its library of more than 75 shortform originals on Roku. Her other clients have included Disney, Time Warner and Amblin Partners.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... "Demonstrating the wastefulness of traveling 15 hours for a 30-minute meeting."

CORPORATE

Stephen Saltzman
Paul Hastings

COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL

During a challenging period for dealmaking across hemispheres, Saltzman continues to assist high-profile international talent and financiers in closing big-ticket business in Hollywood, such as advising Chinese studio Huayi Brothers Media, which co-bankrolled the largest indie film to complete production in 2020, Roland Emmerich's \$140 million *Moonfall*. Other notable offshore clients include Germany's Constantin Films and South Korea's CJ Entertainment (which jointly invested \$275 million into Skydance last year).



Polashuk



Putnam



Richman



Román Griffith



Rose



Rosengart



Rush



Saeed



Saltzman



Schenkman



Schreck



Schwartz



Shapiro

TALENT

Michael Schenkman
Goodman Genow

BERKELEY LAW

Goodman, Schenkman and Stone, Genow officially closed their merger March 1, 2020, days before the COVID-19 lockdown hit the town. "It was weird not to be in the office, but the firm did well," says Schenkman. Elsewhere, he was on the front lines of Christopher Nolan's *Tenet* release-date drama and navigated Warners' slate segue to HBO Max for Lisa Joy and Jonathan Nolan's *Reminiscence*.

My new mantra is ... "It wasn't a 'hoax.'"

TALENT

Ira Schreck
Schreck Rose

COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL

A dog lover who now finds himself with a cat (a rescue who is "delightful"), Schreck had to lead his Manhattan-based firm, which represents many Broadway actors, through the pandemic shutdown. Despite the challenges, certain clients — like Katori Hall and Dominique Fishback — rose to the moment with activism and social justice projects. Elsewhere, Schreck, who decamped from the city in 2020 to upstate New York, renegotiated *The View* co-host Sunny Hostin's deal and inked Sarah Jessica Parker's return to *Sex and the City*.

What's the worst piece of advice you've ever received? "Don't worry about backends on HBO shows. (I'm happy to say I ignored that advice.)"

LITIGATION

Robert Schwartz
Quinn Emanuel

USC GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW

When a thorny contract problem rises to litigation, Hollywood types turn to Schwartz. After four years in court with the creators of *This Is Spinal Tap* over profits and rights, the attorney finally settled the case for Vivendi and StudioCanal in December. The co-chair of Quinn Emanuel's media and entertainment practice also has been on the front lines of COVID-related changes to movie-release strategies by studios and their affiliated streamers. What's more, Schwartz has just begun a confidential arbitration for a client against Donald Trump related to the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol.

My new mantra is ... "No one knows if you're wearing running shorts."

TALENT

P.J. Shapiro
Ziffren Brittenham

USC GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW

Off the heels of crafting Phoebe Waller-Bridge's rich Amazon deal, Shapiro helped the star line up her next two highly anticipated projects: a *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* remake with Donald Glover and *Indiana Jones 5* opposite Harrison Ford. The rep

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also had to navigate unprecedented (thanks to the pandemic) negotiations for the day-and-date theatrical and streaming releases of Emma Stone's *Cruella* and Daniel Kaluuya's *Judas and the Black Messiah*, the latter of which saw the red-hot actor sweep awards season and earn his first Oscar. "Being alongside him for the ride was really cool," says Shapiro. Other powerhouse clients keeping him busy: John Cena, Selena Gomez and Tiffany Haddish.

What's the power lunch spot you can't wait to get back to? "Javier's in Century City. Nothing demonstrates power like me going through three buckets of chips five chips at a time."

TALENT

Nina Shaw
Del Shaw

COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL

Shaw's trailblazing work for the culture (which included helping commission the landmark McKinsey report on Black representation) should never obscure her dealmaking prowess, which this year included Andra Day's award-winning acting debut in *The United States vs. Billie Holiday*, Malcolm Spellman's breakthrough head writer position on Disney+'s *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*, Gina Prince-Bythewood's hit Netflix feature *The Old Guard* and Misha Green's and Jurnee Smollett's pacts to showrun and star, respectively, in HBO's *Lovecraft Country*.

TALENT

Lawrence Shire
Grubman Shire

GW LAW

The New York-based Shire has a wealth of theater, sports, publishing and music expertise and handles crossover work for such heavy hitters as Madonna, Elton John and Bruce Springsteen. He inked the The Boss' first-ever TV commercial, which aired during the Super Bowl in February, and struck LeBron James' billion-dollar lifetime Nike deal — as well as somehow helping to switch the Lakers star this year from pitching Coke to touting Pepsi, which Shire says was "pretty amazing."

The NFT I'd buy in a second is ... "Mickey Mantle's 500th home run hit off Stu Miller."

CORPORATE

Amy Siegel
O'Melveny

LOYOLA LAW SCHOOL

Siegel's roster includes Warner Bros., Paramount, Pearl Studio and Bron Studios — and 2020 saw her lead ViacomCBS' acquisition of a 49 percent stake in Miramax in a \$375 million deal, "a library that I've been familiar with throughout my career." Specializing in licensing, distribution and strategic partnerships that involve an IP component, she also advised tech startup Loooped



Shaw



Shire



Siegel



Slewett



Sloane



Smelkinson



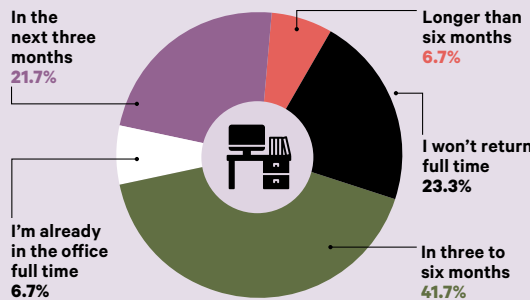
Snow



Snyder

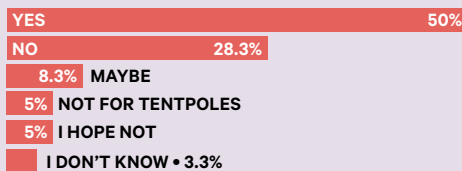
Power Lawyer Confidential Poll

WHEN DO YOU EXPECT TO RETURN TO THE (PHYSICAL) OFFICE FULL TIME?

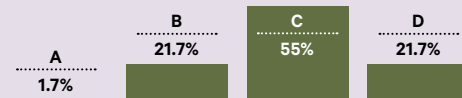


Rick Genow's tricked-out tree-house office in a 70-year-old Brazilian Pepper was generously loaned by his daughter, Gisele, 14, who he says was "happy to see it put to good use and happier to get her parents out of the house."

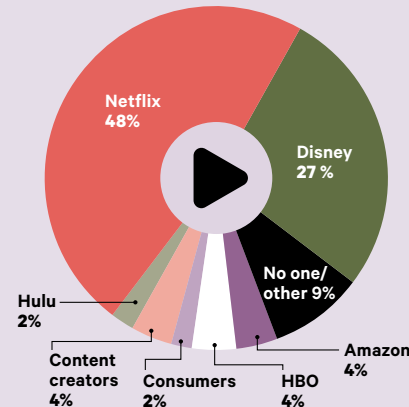
ARE THEATRICAL WINDOWS AS WE KNOW THEM A THING OF THE PAST?



WHAT GRADE WOULD YOU GIVE ENTERTAINMENT LAW ON DIVERSITY WITHIN ITS RANKS?



WHO'S WINNING THE STREAMING WARS?



in agreements with major media partners to use its video chat platforms to connect artists with fans through digital meet-and-greets and live events.

What's the power lunch spot you can't wait to get back to? "The Rooftop by JG at The Waldorf."

TALENT

Gregory Slewett
Ziffren Brittenham

CARDOZO LAW

Bridgerton breakout Regé-Jean Page has reach full-fledged film star status, with Slewett helping negotiate roles in Netflix's big-budgeted outing *The Gray Man* and Paramount's *Dungeons & Dragons* film. "It's been really a fun ride," says Slewett of Page's climb. He also helped Michael B. Jordan chart the next chapter of his already established career, setting up his Outlier Society with an Amazon film deal and a new president in Elizabeth Raposo.

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... "I hope to permanently replace work lunches with work hikes."

TALENT

Jason Sloane
Sloane Offer

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

Sloane has found himself in the middle of the current dealmaking mess that is the conversion of theatrical releases to streaming. Will Smith's *King Richard* and Hugh Jackman's *Reminiscence* were among

the Warners slate going day-and-date with HBO Max. Meanwhile, Amy Adams' *Disenchanted* went to Disney+, Chris Pratt's *The Tomorrow War* went to Amazon and Mark Wahlberg's *Infinite* went to Paramount+. "It's a fairly daily occurrence these days," says Sloane of the streaming issues. "You have to pre-anticipate what the landscape is going to be and have malleable deal structures because of the varying release media and release windows. It's the Wild West out there now." **The pandemic changed my work life forever by ...** "Making me realize that I can work paperless and no longer have to be 50-plus hours in the office."

TALENT

Mitch Smelkinson
Goodman Genow

LOYOLA LAW SCHOOL

Smelkinson says he tends to attract "a certain type" of client. "I don't have a lot of divas," he says. "They are good humans, which makes going to work every day a lot more gratifying." Among them are Anthony Hopkins, who just won an Oscar for his role in *The Father*; Oscar Isaac, who inked a deal to star in Disney+'s *Moon Knight* series; and Sian Heder, whose Sundance darling film *CODA* broke the festival's all-time sales record when it was purchased by Apple TV+. **The NFT I'd buy in a second is ...** "A clip of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's first dunk as a Bruin."

TALENT

Cheryl Snow
Gang Tyre

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW

"I'm excited," says Snow of the industry opening back up. "There are so many outlets for great content, which means so many opportunities for our clients to tell their stories." She represents Iman Vellani, who will be the first Muslim Marvel superhero as Ms. Marvel in *The Marvels*, as well as Melissa Rauch, the *Big Bang Theory* alum who will executive produce and star in the reboot of *Night Court*, and Ben Stiller, who will direct and produce the adaptation of the Rachel Maddow podcast *Bag Man* for Focus.

What's the power lunch spot you can't wait to get back to? "La Scala. I really miss that chopped salad. I have ordered it, but it's not the same."

LITIGATION

Orin Snyder
Gibson Dunn

PENN LAW SCHOOL

Whenever a client is sued, Snyder is typically ready with a tougher-than-brass quote about how the adversary will pay. More often than not, Snyder proves it true. He not only won a case over Jerry Seinfeld's *Comedians in Cars* series, but the plaintiff there might be on the hook for nearly \$1 million in legal fees. Snyder also helped AMC stop the bleeding in the long legal war over *Walking Dead* profits with a trial win in the Robert Kirkman-led case, and has been

Navigating new paths to growth

As the entertainment and media landscape undergoes rapid transformation, new entrants and industry veterans alike count on a team of sophisticated advisors with a unique combination of in-depth industry knowledge, business acumen and legal savvy.

We congratulate all *The Hollywood Reporter* 2021 Power Lawyers, including our Entertainment and Media partners Craig Emanuel, Stephen Saltzman, Susan Williams, and Mickey Mayerson, and Employment partner Felicia Davis.

POWER LAWYERS



**Craig
Emanuel**



**Stephen
Saltzman**



**Susan
Williams**



**Felicia
Davis**

LEGAL LEGEND



**Mickey
Mayerson**

PAUL

HASTINGS

Paul Hastings is a leading global law firm with its entertainment and media practice based in Century City and with a strong presence throughout Asia, Europe, Latin America and the United States.

helping Facebook move past massive litigation over the misuse of user data. He's now defending Bob Dylan in a suit over the mega-sale of his song catalog.

CORPORATE
Christopher Spicer
Akin Gump

GEORGETOWN LAW
 In addition to advising established clients on traditional entertainment deals, like Comerica Bank's loan facility for Bron Studios to co-finance a Warner Bros. slate and more than a dozen multimillion-dollar deals for East West Bank, Spicer is expanding his roster to include new players. He notes, "With the explosion of content, it has been fun representing international companies with underlying IP that is hot for new projects."

The pandemic changed my work life forever by ... "Proving that daily work schedules can be more effective if they are fluid."

TALENT
Douglas Stone
Glaser Weil

BERKELEY LAW
 Making about as big a move as an attorney could make, Stone left the firm he started 25 years ago and joined Glaser Weil in 2020. "It was time to make a change," he says of the decision. "Even though Glaser Weil is a much bigger firm, the entertainment department is quite small and it gives me the ability to do what I loved doing before, which is to build out from within." Among those who moved with Stone was client Daniel Craig, who was part of a massive \$469 million deal with Netflix for two *Knives Out* sequels.

What's the worst piece of advice you've ever received? "Shave off my beard."

LITIGATION
Adam Streisand
Sheppard Mullin

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW
 Hulu and FX viewers may now recognize Streisand from his appearance in the documentary *Framing Britney Spears*, but he's known within the industry as the litigator to call for fights over celebrity estates. Describing his work as "Succession in real life," Streisand recently won a case for client Elizabeth Hurley's son, Damian, to inherit a sum from trusts established by the father of his dad, the late billionaire Steve Bing, and is representing Chadwick Boseman's widow, Simone Ledward Boseman, as well as handling disputes involving the estates of Hugh Hefner and Tom Petty.

My new mantra is ... "Make sure to enjoy every moment with the people who count because who knows what pandemic will arrive tomorrow or next year."

CORPORATE
Matthew Syrkin
Hughes Hubbard

BERKELEY LAW
 An entertainment-tech hybrid, Syrkin is a new type of Hollywood attorney. "You need lawyers who've grown up in the trenches with technology-driven products and services that are at the forefront of disruption and content delivery," says Syrkin, who represented Roku in its ad tech acquisition and OTT TV-based partnership with Nielsen, and WarnerMedia on deals, subscriber pacts and strategy for the upcoming overseas launch of HBO Max in Latin America. He also advised MSG Entertainment in the development of high-resolution, immersive film and TV technologies for arenas.

My new mantra is ... "This too shall pass or irrevocably disrupt life as we know it. Really, a coin flip these days."

CORPORATE
Matthew Thompson
Sidley Austin

UC HASTINGS COLLEGE OF THE LAW
 Dwayne Johnson is expanding his business empire with the help of Thompson, and it now includes the XFL football league that the lawyer says will present the "first meaningful professional challenge to our friends at the NFL." The actor turned mogul is now also the owner of one of the most successful spirit brands of all time, Teremana tequila, which expanded its distribution reach through a deal with Jägermeister. "It's everywhere in the world, and the only other brand they're in partnership with is Teremana," says Thompson, who's also handling music rights deals for Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group.

What's the biggest effect of packaging coming to an end? "A sea change in how agencies make their money."

TALENT
Fred Toczek
Felker Toczek

USC GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW
The Queen's Gambit star Anya Taylor-Joy is among Toczek's rising talent. "She's having an unbelievable ascent," says the lawyer, who also represents *The Great's* Nicholas Hoult, *The Umbrella Academy's* Robert Sheehan, *Prodigal Son's* Tom Payne as well as Kaitlyn Dever, whose upcoming projects include *Dear Evan Hansen*. Another highlight for Toczek was working with former NFL player Julian Edelman on his overall deal with ViacomCBS.

My new mantra is ... "Be where your feet are."

TALENT
Steve Warren
Hansen Jacobson

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL
 Leonardo DiCaprio has entered the streaming age in a big way thanks to



Spicer



Stone



Streisand



Syrkin



Thompson



Toczek



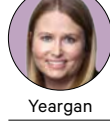
Warren



Wolf



Wolf



Yeargan



Yorn



Zuckerman Williams

Warren, who brokered the deal for the actor's first Netflix feature (Adam McKay's *Don't Look Up*) and an Apple TV+ first-look deal for his Appian Way banner. Meanwhile, client Martin Scorsese also signed with Apple TV+, while Charlize Theron's *Atomic Blonde* franchise migrated to Netflix for its sequel. This year, Warren found himself in a new role: executive producer of HBO's Emmy-nominated series *We're Here*. Says Warren, "I am still a lawyer first and foremost, and this [show] melds my business instincts and my creative instincts."

TALENT
David Weber
Sloane Offer

USC GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW
 Client Ryan Reynolds has kept busy doing movie after movie, signing an overall deal with Paramount and, yes, buying a soccer club. "During the pandemic, some clients expanded their range of activities, and it's been an interesting growth aspect for the job," says Weber. "Ryan represents that as much as anybody." On top of working with such clients as Emily Blunt and Elizabeth Olsen, Weber also made unique life rights deals for basketball players Giannis Antetokounmpo and Maya Moore, who are both getting the Hollywood treatment. Elsewhere, Joaquin Phoenix built out his post-*Joker* career by signing on to star in a film for Ridley Scott and Ari Aster while assembling his production entity.

The NFT I'd buy in a second is ... "A clip of a favorite movie scene playing on the Cinerama Dome screen."

TALENT
Bryan Wolf
Ziffren Brittenham

COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL
 Wolf has a knack for guiding independent production companies like Michael Ellenberg's MediaRes, Erik Feig's Picturestart and David Ellison's Skydance. Earlier this year, he brokered a deal for the latter's animation outfit to supply content to Apple TV+ in an exclusive, multiyear pact. But he reps plenty of creative-types, too. Judd Apatow is directing a new movie, *The Bubble*, for Netflix; Nick Stoller is making the comedy series *Platonic*, starring Seth Rogen and Rose Byrne, for Apple TV+; and Steve Carell is back for the second seasons of *Space Force* and *Morning Show*.

What's the biggest effect of packaging coming to an end? "If I answered this question, readers would think I was retiring."

LITIGATION
Ashley Yeargan
Russ August & Kabat

STANFORD LAW SCHOOL
 Drake turns to Yeargan for legal counsel, which includes dealing with multiple lawsuits in the U.S. and abroad. She's also preparing for trial on behalf of late automotive

icon Carroll Hall Shelby's trust and is the go-to for Simon Cowell's Syco Entertainment — which involves transactional work too, like the recently announced *America's Got Talent* spinoff, *AGT: Extreme*. Says Yeargan, "It gives me the opportunity to not only do litigation but to expand into dealmaking, content creation and protection."

What's the power lunch spot you can't wait to get back to?

"It would have been Tavern, but I'm excited A.O.C. is moving west."

TALENT
Kevin Yorn
Morris Yorn

TULANE LAW SCHOOL
 Yorn's roster is full of female all-stars. After making the deal for Scarlett Johansson to headline *Black Widow*, he brokered a unique pact for her to star in and produce the film *Bride for Apple TV+ and A24*. The rep — who recently added TikTok stars Charlie and Dixie D'Amelio, Alicia Keys and Jason Sudeikis to his roster — helped put his other Marvel star, Zoe Saldana, in David O. Russell's upcoming film and in Hello Sunshine's Netflix miniseries *From Scratch*. He also renegotiated salaries for Laura Linney in *Ozark* and Elliot Page in *Umbrella Academy* and helped talent invest in startups like sock brand Bombas and investment app Public.

The thing I missed most during 2020 is ... "Not be able to use my Las Vegas Raider season tickets."

CORPORATE
Susan Zuckerman Williams
Paul Hastings

USC GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW
 The veteran dealmaker loves complicated transactions that could make others' heads spin. In that vein, Zuckerman Williams led a team of lawyers in the U.S., Canada and the U.K. to close a whammy in July 2020 for client Truist Bank in selling the rights to Kew Media's library of 1,000 titles to Berry Meyerowitz and Jeff Sackman's Quiver Entertainment and in connection with Imagine Entertainment's Brian Grazer and Ron Howard's investment and ownership stake in documentarian Alex Gibney's Jigsaw Productions, which had been co-owned by Kew. A jigsaw, indeed. Other clients include MidCap Financial and Vine Alternative Investments.

My new mantra is ... "Instacart, Instacart, Instacart."

Profiles written by Trilby Beresford, Patrick Brzeski, Kirsten Chuba, Ashley Cullins, Sharareh Drury, Eriq Gardner, Mia Galuppo, James Hibberd, Emily Hilton, Rebecca Keegan, Katie Kilkenny, Borys Kit, Pamela McClintock, Alex Ritman, Scott Roxborough, Bryn Sandberg, Tatiana Siegel, Rebecca Sun and Georg Szalai.

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TOP 10 LAW SCHOOLS

From Hollywood-adjacent campuses to East Coast Ivies, these institutions are among the best for educating the next generation of entertainment attorneys

By Ashley Cullins

E

ach year, *The Hollywood Reporter* spotlights the top schools for entertainment law, determined by how many alumni are among the ranks of Power Lawyers. This time, *THR*

expanded its criteria to factor in specialized courses, externship opportunities and more program essentials that give students an edge in handling the complex deals and high-stakes litigation that comes with the Hollywood territory — even if nothing could prepare young attorneys for doing so in a pandemic.

1. UCLA School of Law

A longtime training ground for Hollywood attorneys, UCLA tops the list with an impressive offering through the Ziffren Institute for Media, Entertainment, Technology and Sports Law that includes a media and entertainment specialization, a documentary film legal clinic and sports simulation program — plus, the school has a dedicated entertainment law review and a well-established externship program. Amid the pandemic, UCLA's 44th annual entertainment symposium pivoted from a two-day live event at its Westwood campus to a four-night webinar series and launched three new industry-related courses: one focused on ethics, another on esports and the third on the future of television (taught by legal legend Ken Ziffren).

2. Harvard Law School

What the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Ivy lacks in proximity to Hollywood, it makes up for in prestige. Consistently one of the top-ranked law schools in the nation, Harvard also has specialized courses in entertainment and media law. Alumna Tara Kole, a professor and mentor, says it's more entertainment-focused and the students "impress me at every turn."

3. USC Gould School of Law

USC Gould's Media, Entertainment and Technology Law program is enhancing its practice-oriented, skills-based offerings. It has added and expanded courses (including a new emphasis on music law issues surrounding the streaming economy). And this fall it will offer a new Sports Law in Practice course taught by Glaser Weil's Joseph Longo, who's been representing MLB players for decades.

4. Berkeley Law

Berkeley provides entertainment-relevant courses covering things like social justice issues in the industry, sports contracts, trademarks — and now even offers a class on social media law. The NorCal school also boasts *The Berkeley Journal of Entertainment & Sports Law* and in November held its (virtual) sixth annual Sports & Entertainment Conference.

5. Columbia Law School

Set amid the bustling entertainment hub of

Manhattan, Columbia draws its fair share of future Hollywood lawyers — like Greenberg Glusker's Matt Galsor, who jumped at the opportunity to leave L.A. for the East Coast Ivy. "The moment Columbia extended me an offer of admission, I accepted it," says Galsor. "I know a good deal when I see it."

6. Southwestern Law School

Southwestern pivoted amid the pandemic by moving all its planned courses, events and programs online — and converting its "A Conversation With ..." speaker series into a podcast. The school also grew participation in its pro bono Entertainment and the Arts Legal Clinic, will offer a summer event to help students who aspire to have their own practice, and hired Kevin J. Greene as a professor.

7. Loyola Law School

The L.A.-based school celebrated its 100th anniversary during the pandemic and held an event dedicated to embracing the changes caused by COVID-19, hosted by a group of student societies. Meanwhile, veteran attorney Julie Shapiro, whose résumé includes the former William Morris Agency, New Line and APA, joined LLS as director of its Entertainment and Media Law Institute.

8. Georgetown Law

After it celebrated its 150th anniversary (virtually), a buzzy new hire gives Georgetown even more acclaim: second gentleman Doug Emhoff joined the faculty in January. The D.C.-based school also added new classes on entertainment disputes and the taxation of IP.

9. Stanford Law School

"Stanford has cultivated one of the best intellectual property programs in the country, which is a critical foundation for a career in entertainment law," says alumna Ashley Yeagan. While still a student, she persuaded Stanford to add an entertainment law class that she designed with her mentor Larry Stein. It's still offered and is now taught by Bert Fields and his partner Bonnie Eskenazi. There's also the Stanford Entertainment and Sports Law Association and the Juelsgaard Intellectual Property and Innovation Clinic.

10. NYU School of Law

Closing out the top 10, NYU offers an Antitrust, Intellectual Property and Information concentration, entertainment-related courses and a Technology Law and Policy Clinic as well as an entertainment-centric student society and law review.

Honorable mentions

Brooklyn Law School, Penn Law, Cornell Law School, UC Hastings College of the Law and GW Law also are among the best and most popular programs in the country. **THR**

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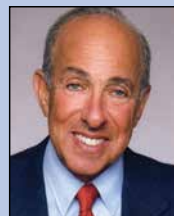
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PLAYBOOK

INCHING CLOSER TOGETHER: NAVIGATING THE FIRST POST(ISH)-PANDEMIC FYC

The latest round of drive-in screenings for Emmy hopefuls sees talent breaking free of Zoom as awards strategists juggle the ease of virtual with the appeal of in-person BY MIKEY O'CONNELL



The epicenter of Emmy campaigning now resides 15 miles due east of the TV Academy's North Hollywood headquarters.

In lieu of the organization's state-of-the-art cantilevered theater, home before the pandemic to an annual marathon of screenings and cocktail hours, what in-person schmoozing is to be found this FYC season is taking place in the parking lot of a 99-year-old stadium. At Pasadena's Rose Bowl, a handful of programmers are courting Emmy voters almost nightly with that COVID-era novelty — the drive-in.

On a recent May evening, some 250 cars, 100 of them carrying at least one Emmy voter, rolled down the Arroyo Parkway for a screening of Bravo's *Top Chef*. There was a drive-up photo booth,

a taped message from Padma Lakshmi and company at the top of the episode and, in a marriage of circumstance and content, auto-bound guests were delivered re-creations of the meals served on the 70-foot screen via a carhop.

"The world is opening up," says Ellen Stone, executive vp entertainment brand strategy and consumer engagement for NBCUniversal Television and Streaming. So confident is she in the gradual return to normalcy that she recently set in-person festival BravoCon for October in New York. "People are getting vaccinated," she added. "They're feeling better about being in social situations that follow protocol and are safe."

Safe, if you're going for scale, still means a drive-in. There have been car-less events — like April's intimate season three premiere of

FX's *Pose* in New York and Disney's subdued red carpet for *Cruella* in Hollywood — though nothing is on deck for the nomination round of Emmy campaigning. For 10 nights in May, WarnerMedia held Rose Bowl screenings for potential heavy hitters such as

The Flight Attendant (HBO Max) and *Mare of Easttown* (HBO). Each accompanied a pretaped panel with talent. And, May 25 through June 18, the suite of Disney TV brands will screen 12 series.

Perhaps buoyed by their recent in-person events, Disney is actually bringing talent on site. A *Pose* event will feature a panel and a musical performance by stars Billy Porter and Mj Rodriguez. Cynthia Erivo will be on hand to plug National Geographic's *Genius: Aretha* — as will Anthony Anderson and Tracee Ellis Ross for *Black-ish*. "Campaigning live and in person has always been a powerful driver of conversation and excitement among the Academy voters," says Shannon Ryan, president of marketing at ABC Entertainment and Disney Television Studios. "Coming up with a safe, innovative live

Key Emmy Dates

JUNE 17 Nominations-round voting begins

JUNE 28 Nominations-round voting ends at 10 p.m. PT

JULY 13 Nominations announced

AUG. 19 Final-round voting begins

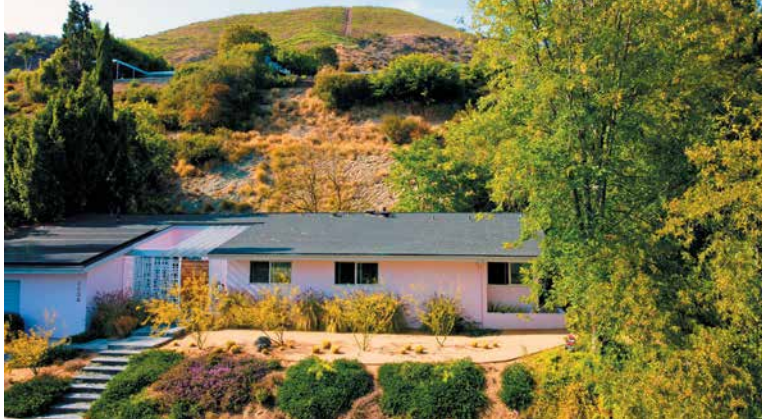
AUG. 30 Final-round voting ends at 10 p.m. PT

SEPT. 19 The 2021 Emmy Awards on CBS

Illustration by **Kati Szilágyi**



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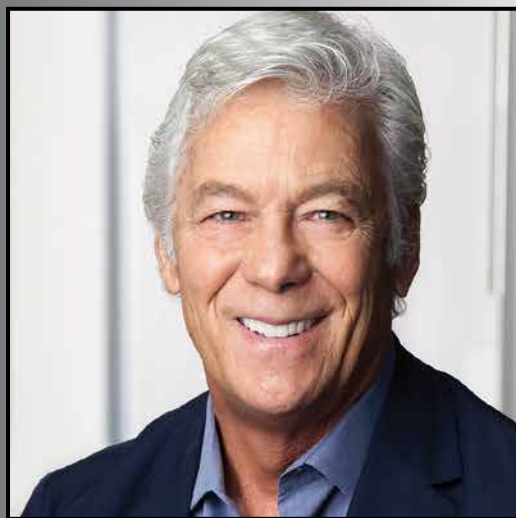
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experience to celebrate our contenders was something we prioritized.”

For awards strategists and marketing executives alike, the scope of these events is a welcome shift from the first phase of Emmy FYC in 2020. Not only did the early days of COVID-19 kneecap budgets, but no one wanted to look as if they were campaigning — even though nearly everyone did it with quietly promoted virtual screenings and panels.

Still, not all are ready to return to experiential. Netflix, the biggest FYC spender in recent years, is keeping its events strictly digital by airing panels of all eligible series on its branded FYSEE platform. For voters particularly nostalgic for the free eats associated with Emmy season, the streamer devoted a significant portion of its FYC spend to partner with independent L.A. restaurants to deliver branded bites — Pitfire Pizza for *Kevin Hart: Zero F**ks Given*, macarons from Pastreez for *Emily in Paris* and Trejo's Tacos for *Selena: The Series*, among others — to those who signed up in time. (Amazon, for its part, is strictly digital — save a pop-up restaurant in support of *The Boys*.)

Most strategists expect more in-person events as soon as the second half of FYC this summer, but none forecast a world in which the virtual panels of the past year ever go away. Talent, who often flew to L.A. for even a single campaign event, has grown accustomed to literally phoning it in — and, even once 600 Emmy enthusiasts can again cram into an enclosed space, there's only one way to guarantee that content is available to all 20,000-plus voting members of the TV Academy.

“There's been a paradigm shift,” says Stone. “I don't think we'll ever walk away from virtual. That's now part of the expectation. But we're still looking to swing into experiential, because people have missed that. Once there is more confidence, there'll be more opportunities.” **TJR**

2021'S MOST CUTTHROAT CATEGORY: LIMITED AND ANTHOLOGY SERIES

There is no other race as packed with critically acclaimed programs and performances as the limited series category. And unlike the drama and comedy groups (which take eight nominees), only five will make the cut



From left: Showtime's *The Good Lord Bird*; HBO Max's *It's a Sin*; HBO's *Mare of Easttown*; Disney+'s *WandaVision*.

FARGO (FX)

The series' previous three seasons earned a slew of nominations, including three in the limited series category (winning in 2014). The latest season, set in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1950, stars Chris Rock and Jessie Buckley.

GENIUS: ARETHA (NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC)

For its third season, the anthology drama focuses on the life of Aretha Franklin, played by Oscar nominee and Tony winner Cynthia Erivo. Its first two seasons (on Einstein and Picasso) were nominated for the limited series Emmy.

THE GOOD LORD BIRD (SHOWTIME)

Ethan Hawke delivers a showstopping turn as the eccentric abolitionist John

Brown in this historical dark comedy, adapted from James McBride's award-winning novel.

HALSTON (NETFLIX)

Three-time Emmy nominee Ewan McGregor transforms into the iconic fashion designer for the Ryan Murphy series.

I MAY DESTROY YOU (HBO)

The breakout British drama from Michaela Coel, who stars as a woman rebuilding her life after a rape, earned massive critical acclaim, picked up PGA and SAG Awards nominations and won a pair of Independent Spirit Awards.

IT'S A SIN (HBO MAX)

The five-part series, set in London in the late '80s during the HIV/AIDS crisis, was a record-breaking hit in the U.K.

MARE OF EASTTOWN (HBO)

Kate Winslet (who won an Emmy for *Mildred Pierce*) delivers a commanding performance as a detective investigating a murder in the Philadelphia suburbs.

THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT (NETFLIX)

Scott Frank's stylish saga became Netflix's most watched miniseries after its release in October and won two Globes. Series star Anya Taylor-Joy also won at the SAG Awards and Critics Choice Awards.

SMALL AXE (AMAZON)

The five-film anthology centering on West Indian immigrants living in London was directed by Steve McQueen and was inspired by his own upbringing.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD (AMAZON)

Oscar winner Barry Jenkins' first real foray into TV is this visually stunning adaptation of Colson Whitehead's novel, a fictional story in which the underground railroad is literally a train.

THE UNDOING (HBO)

Produced by David E. Kelley and helmed by Susanne Bier, this psychological thriller stars Nicole Kidman as a woman whose husband (Hugh Grant) is accused of murder.

WANDA VISION (DISNEY+)

A superhero spinoff wrapped in a mystery inside an ode to sitcoms showcased the versatility of Elizabeth Olsen and Paul Bettany while delivering plenty of surprises in true Marvel style.

Three Other Tight Races

DOCUMENTARY SERIES

When it comes to the doc categories, Netflix always delivers an assortment of contenders, and this year is no different, with its offerings including *Pretend It's a City* with Fran Lebowitz and Martin Scorsese; *Night Stalker: The Hunt for a Serial Killer*, about Richard Ramirez; medical series *Lenox Hill*; and *Song Exploder*, based on the hit music podcast. They'll face off against HBO Max's *Expecting Amy*, which focuses on Amy Schumer's fertility journey, HBO's six-part Golden State Killer doc *I'll Be Gone in the Dark* and the much discussed *Allen v. Farrow*.

DOCUMENTARY SPECIAL

Music documentaries often rule this category, with Netflix's *Biggie* and HBO's *Tina* and *The Bee Gees: How Can You Mend a Broken Heart* numbering among the contenders this year. Plus, Netflix has the buzzy social media doc *The Social Dilemma*, while HBO's lineup includes Alex Gibney's Big Pharma doc *The Crime of the Century* and *Showbiz Kids*, exploring the cost of child stardom.



HBO's documentary series *Allen v. Farrow*.

VARIETY SPECIAL

Dave Chappelle has won this category two of the past three years. He's back with a less traditional Netflix special, *8:46*, in which he opined on the murder of George Floyd and police brutality. While other stand-up specials include Netflix's *Sarah Cooper: Everything's Fine* and HBO Max's *Chelsea Handler: Evolution*, Hulu is pushing for *Derek DelGaudio's In & of Itself*, a filmed version of the illusion/art stage piece that explores identity. — REBECCA FORD



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Reviews

Film

Cruella

Emma Stone makes a vibrant villain-in-training in the fun, if frenzied, *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* origin story with style to spare

By Lovia Gyarkye

In case you needed reminding: The *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* franchise has never been about the dogs. No — its real star is Cruella de Vil, the acerbic, deliciously biting antagonist with an unhinged fur obsession.

Betty Lou Gerson voiced the character in the 1961 Disney animated film, investing the villain with wit, haughtiness and an understated charm. Glenn Close came next in 1996's live-action *101 Dalmatians*, all but — excuse the hyperbole — revolutionizing the role (see page 104). Cruella, in Close's claws, was sharper, more menacing and, with her untamed two-toned black-and-white hair, scarlet lipstick and maniacal laugh, frankly iconic.

To fill her shoes — or should I say her furs — is a daunting undertaking. But it's one Emma Stone tackles with admirable hustle and considerable charisma in Disney's new *Cruella*. Stone's task in this fitfully fun, frenzied, beautifully costumed version directed by Craig Gillespie (*I, Tonya*) is to help us understand a Cruella-in-progress — the person she was before she started kidnapping and skinning puppies. I admit to finding it hard to picture Stone going so flamboyantly savage; despite her lauded work in *La La Land* and *The Favourite*, the actress will, for me, forever be Olive from *Easy A*. But I'm not afraid to admit when I'm wrong.

Running roughly two hours and 16 minutes, *Cruella* pursues a long, at times slow, path to contextualizing the titular figure's



Emma Stone's young Cruella de Vil is an aspiring London fashion designer torn between sweetness and savagery.

origins. The film begins in 1960s England with young Cruella (Tipper Seifert-Cleveland), birth name Estella, struggling to fit in. There are early signs of the woman she will become: When her mother (Emily Beecham) admonishes her for not following a prescribed pattern while sewing, Cruella, precocious and unfazed, snaps, "That's ugly," before ripping her mother's work to shreds.

She doesn't fare much better at school, where her bicolored hair makes her a target for bullies and her attempts at self-defense land her in the dean's office. Her only friend is Anita Darling (first played by Florisa Kamara, later by Kirby Howell-Baptiste). With Cruella on the verge of being expelled, her mother pulls her out of school and packs their bags, and off to London they go.

On the road, the pair stop at a magnificent country home. Cruella's mother, hushed and vague, commands her daughter to stay in the car. But ever the rebel, Cruella, her rescue puppy in tow, sets out to explore the grounds. What she finds in the house — an opulent fashion show replete with gorgeous gowns — blows her mind and warms her aspiring-designer heart. "For the first time in my life," she marvels via voiceover, "I felt like I belonged."

Mayhem ensues and Cruella finds herself running from security guards and three angry dalmatians, ending up on the estate's veranda, where she sees her mother talking to a mysterious figure. In an unexpected turn, the dogs attack Cruella's mother, pushing her off the terrace's edge.

Her death haunts Cruella, who goes to London, where she links up with a band of orphan thieves

(Ziggy Gardner's Jasper and Joseph MacDonald's Horace). Now played by Stone, our protagonist also spends much time at war with herself: Should she embrace Estella, the kind, well-behaved girl her mother wanted her to be, or go all in as anarchic, angry Cruella? Stone assuredly embodies this tension, shifting between wide-eyed Estella and diabolical Cruella without ever losing the thread — a deep desire to be seen — that connects them.

As the story moves into the 1970s, Cruella, thanks to Jasper (now played by Joel Fry) and Horace (now played by Paul Walter Hauser), lands a job at a prestigious fashion house. Here the film veers into *Devil Wears Prada* terrain — Aline Brosh McKenna, who wrote that 2006 hit, has a story credit on the film — and it's a thrill to see Stone and Emma Thompson, sly and funny



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Reviews

Film & Television

as the Miranda Priestley-esque Baroness in charge of the house, gnash their teeth at each other.

Their interplay is the main attraction in a film that wears its genre loosely, lurching between dark comedy and heist thriller with an over-reliance on cross-cutting and on-the-nose musical cues to manufacture tension. The extent to which the titular figure has been sanitized and softened is also a bit disappointing: This Cruella is more revenge-seeking designer giving #girlboss energy than morally bankrupt dog murderer. (The film sidesteps that part of Cruella's story altogether.) And while no one will be coming to *Cruella* for astute sociopolitical criticism, the movie underutilizes London's punk rock revolution moment, treating it as fodder for Cruella's aesthetic without teasing out the causes that inspired it. It feels like a missed opportunity for a subversiveness that would have deepened and expanded the film's vision.

What *Cruella* lacks in script, however, it makes up for in sheer visual punch, with costume designer Jenny Beavan's exquisitely detailed gowns especially enriching the angsty, sinister universe the film conjures. From Thompson's glamorous plaid gold suit and showstopping dresses to Stone's lace-trimmed gloves, peplum skirts and one adventurous frock made of newspaper, the costumes are architectural and aesthetic feats that pay homage to designers from Vivienne Westwood and John Galliano to Alexander McQueen.

Ironically, contrary to the disposition of its titular character, *Cruella* requires dialing down the cynicism and buying in a little. But after such a wretchedly constrained and constricted year, who isn't ready to revel in a little chaos?

RELEASE DATE Friday, May 28 (Disney)
CAST Emma Stone, Emma Thompson, Emily Beecham, Joel Fry, Paul Walter Hauser, John McCre
DIRECTOR Craig Gillespie
Rated PG-13, 134 minutes



Lisey's Story

Julianne Moore shines as a grieving widow in a well-crafted Apple TV+ series that's a bit too faithful to its Stephen King source material **By Daniel Fienberg**

Apple TV+ has been touting its version of Stephen King's 2006 novel *Lisey's Story* as having been written, in its eight-episode entirety, by the Master of Horror himself. It's a rarity, but it also turns out to be a mixed blessing.

The limited series is one of the most literary-feeling of King adaptations, indulging many of the book's extended metaphors and featuring characters who speak in distinctly Kingian rhythms. This *Lisey's Story* is indeed overflowing with ideas — from the grandiose to the goofy — that work better on the page than the screen. It's up to director Pablo Larraín and a splendid cast led by Julianne Moore and Clive Owen to make the series feel like a series; that effort is sometimes all-too-palpable, especially in a clumsy back half.

Lisey (Moore) is two years into grieving for late husband Scott (Owen, in flashbacks and fantasies), whose best-sellers are beloved by academics and fans alike. Lisey and Scott had a passionate, symbiotic relationship, bound by shared secrets relating to Scott's traumatic childhood. Scott's absence leaves Lisey struggling to find her own identity. Complicating matters, a professor (Ron Cephas Jones) has enlisted unstable superfan Jim (Dane DeHaan) to convince Lisey to give up Scott's personal papers and unpublished manuscripts.

In Scott's past — marked by a strung-out dad (Michael Pitt) and doomed brother — he possessed the ability to journey to a magical realm known as Boo'ya Moon, where Lisey's catatonic sister, Amanda (a fully committed Joan Allen), has currently retreated. This leaves Lisey's other sister, Darla (Jennifer Jason Leigh), as the only one confused by the whole thing (a reaction viewers will identify with).

For the first four hours, Larraín steers into the confusion. Lisey's transition into widowhood — like that of the protagonist in the director's *Jackie* — is evoked in sequences that slip between past and present, reality and

Julianne Moore plays a woman haunted by the death of her husband, a troubled best-selling author (Clive Owen, right).

fantasy. Viewers won't always be able to make sense of Lisey's memories, Scott's recollections and the netherworld where lost souls stare off into something called The Pool. But in Larraín and master cinematographer Darius Khondji's hands, these stretches of the series are enrapturing, like slipping into a warm body of water (which also happens to be one of several overused visual motifs here).

As is frequently the case in King's work, there's a point at which "The real monsters are within" becomes "The real monsters are literal freaking monsters." *Lisey's Story* becomes more conventional as it goes along — an asset when you get funny scenes featuring Moore, Allen and Leigh together but a liability when King loses track of how often characters can say "Boo'ya Moon" before it becomes silly.

Things like that, along with treasure hunts called "bools" or eccentric villains who love retro music and yo-yos, just don't play as well outside the page; perhaps other co-screenwriters might have brought a clearer-eyed perspective on what aspects of the source material should have been excluded.

The cast holds things together. Moore is one of our great screen sobbers, and Lisey's misery gives her ample room to flaunt that skill. But the role also takes advantage of her underused gift for tough-talking humor. Owen is good in affectionate scenes with Moore, less so when mumbling his way through monologues.

Larraín gives every frame intimacy and intensity. What jars in *Lisey's Story* is the obvious tension between fidelity to a text and compatibility with a medium. King clearly opted for the former, when the series might have benefited from the latter.

AIRDATE Friday, June 4 (Apple TV+)
CAST Julianne Moore, Clive Owen, Joan Allen
DIRECTOR Pablo Larraín
ADAPTATION Stephen King



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Television

Ruth Wilson and Andrew Scott play diplomats who brought Israelis and Palestinians to the negotiating table for the Oslo Accords of 1993.



Oslo

Ruth Wilson and Andrew Scott star as married Norwegian diplomats who secretly organized Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in this timely and illuminating HBO film based on the Broadway play **By David Rooney**

Footage at the end of *Oslo* shows President Bill Clinton witnessing the 1993 handshake of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasser Arafat. That moment marked a landmark agreement in which the two adversaries recognized each other's legitimacy for the first time. The solemn impact of the image is fueled by the knowledge that Rabin would be killed two years later by an Israeli extremist and that the accord would be shattered as violence erupted again in 2000 with the Second Intifada. The current Gaza conflict makes the reminder of the historic encounter cut even deeper.

Playwright J.T. Rogers won the top Tony Award in 2017 for his dramatic distillation of the nine months of back-channel negotiations known as the "Oslo Accords," directed by Bartlett Sher with a forensic eye for detail and a gossamer touch with densely complex material.

The writer and director reunite on this classy adaptation for HBO, which trims the three-hour play by almost a third, sacrificing some of its tension, humor and insight. But the film is still an engrossing account of a momentous breakthrough. Few will be unmoved by its tragic timeliness.

Executive produced by Marc Platt and Steven Spielberg, the film boasts an ensemble led by Ruth Wilson and Andrew Scott as Mona Juul and Terje Rod-Larsen (played onstage by Jennifer Ehle and Jefferson Mays), married Norwegian diplomats who used their connections to bring both sides to the table at Borregaard Manor, 60 miles east of Oslo. Given that it was illegal at the time for Israeli and Palestinian politicians to have direct interaction, there's intrigue in the logistics required to make the talks happen. But what resonates most in Rogers' script is each side's desire to stop slaughtering

the other's children and pursue peaceful coexistence.

Wilson's restrained yet quietly impassioned performance becomes the heart of the film, as Mona stresses the need for herself and her husband to remain neutral facilitators. Terje liaises directly with Israel's ambitious new Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Yossi Beilin (Itzik Cohen), who fudges the cooperation of his boss Shimon Peres (Sasson Gabay) and informs the Norwegian that no official government representative can be involved. Instead, he sends two nervous economics professors from Haifa, Yair Hirschfeld (Dov Glickman) and Ron Pundak (Rotem Keinan), who get a cold reception from Palestinian finance minister Ahmed Qurie (Salim Daw) and PLO liaison Hassan Asfour (Waleed Zuaiter).

Scott is enormously sympathetic, walking on eggshells among the spiky guests and jokingly wondering if they'll be murdered in their sleep by Asfour. The unpromising start improves when Terje insists on one room for political discussions and another space to keep things personal, with free-flowing Johnny Walker, jokes and the heavenly waffles of the manor's housekeeper (Geraldine Alexander).

When the Palestinians balk at continuing the discussions with Israeli civilians, the Israelis send in Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir (Jeff Wilbusch), a showboating exemplar of virile magnetism. His arrival prompts one of the film's most affecting scenes when he follows an argument by inviting Qurie for a walk in the snow, where the men discover commonalities.

The final cog in the machine is Israeli defense forces lawyer Joel Singer (Igal Naor), who comes with a 200-question response to the Declaration of Principles hashed out over multiple drafts. Given Singer's role as author of the rules of engagement used by the Israeli army to suppress Palestinians, his arrival causes Asfour to bristle. The fundamental difference remains that one side believes they are voluntarily shrinking their country while the other insists they are merely giving back, not giving up, what was never theirs. But an agreement is finally reached, allowing Mona and Terje to present it to Peres during a state visit to Stockholm.

Rogers thoughtfully frames the negotiation against the backdrop of a skeptical world that no longer believes peace is possible. This gives *Oslo* a melancholy undertone enriched by Jeff Russo and Zoë Keating's elegant score.

Sher, a top-tier New York stage director, brings a confident hand to his first film project, aided by the refined compositions and exquisite lighting of Janusz Kaminski's cinematography. The final shot, of the empty negotiating table bathed in soft sunbeams from open windows, is a poignant suggestion of the possibilities for mutual understanding even in a world of age-old hostilities.

AIRDATE 8 p.m. Saturday, May 29 (HBO)
CAST Ruth Wilson, Andrew Scott, Itzik Cohen, Salim Daw, Sasson Gabay
DIRECTOR Bartlett Sher
SCREENWRITER J.T. Rogers, from his play
 118 minutes

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Glenn Close First Brought Cruella de Vil to Life in '96

Disney's Emma Stone-starring *Cruella* — in theaters and on Disney+ Premier Access on May 28 — will be the third live-action spinoff of the 1961 animated classic, *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*, itself based on the 1956 Dodie Smith novel *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*. The first, 1996's *101 Dalmatians*, was the studio's second attempt at turning a hand-drawn property into flesh and blood (its first was 1994's *The Jungle Book*, which was later remade by Jon Favreau in 2016). Disney then-chairman Joe Roth championed *Dalmatians*, seeing a profitable path in live-action remakes (and how right he was). The legendary John Hughes wrote the script, updating the plot somewhat (Pongo's dad, played

by Jeff Daniels, is a video game designer) and, more notably, rendering the spotted stars unable to speak. To play the villainous Cruella de Vil, Hughes pitched the project directly to Glenn Close in New York, where she was starring in the Broadway musical *Sunset Boulevard*. She wasn't interested at first, but *Sunset Boulevard* costume designer Anthony Powell convinced her of the movie's potential. Ultimately, she signed on — and Powell, along with Rosemary Burrows, designed the costumes for *Dalmatians*. Director Stephen Herek (*Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*) opted to use real dogs on the massive set, which filmed at Shepperton Studios near London. This sent dalmatian clubs into a tizzy,

concerned the puppies would be discarded after production. "I guaranteed that the adoption of every single puppy used on the film would be prearranged," producer Edward S. Feldman wrote in his memoir. "We built a dalmatian hotel at Shepperton, and the dogs were treated like royalty. Thirteen trainers were assigned

to the puppies. ... We needed 300 because we could only use them when they were 5 or 6 weeks old and at their cutest." The movie was a hit, grossing \$136 million domestically (\$232 million in 2021) on a \$67 million budget (\$114 million), leading Close to reprise the role for *102 Dalmatians* in 2000. — SETH ABRAMOVITCH

'101 Dalmatians'

By Duane Byrge

Boxoffice is going to the dogs, namely Disney's "101 Dalmatians," a bounding, tail-wagging charmer that should fill the holiday bowls with piles of green stuff. A certain domestic hit, *Buena Vista* should also strike gold internationally with this farcical, live-action family film. And when it



Glenn Close as Cruella de Vil with director Stephen Herek (crouching) on the set of *101 Dalmatians*. In its Nov. 25, 1996, review, *THR* said Close's "haughty snappings are wicked-witch scary."

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