

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**MATTHEW RHYS TALKS BRINGING NEW VOICE TO
PERRY MASON IN EMMY®**

(NOHO ARTS DISTRICT, Calif. — June 30, 2020) — On the heels of his Emmy-winning role in *The Americans*, Welsh actor Matthew Rhys brings back his Yankee accent for the starring role in HBO's new series *Perry Mason*. **Emmy**, the award-winning official publication of the Television Academy, talks with Rhys about bringing a new voice to an old favorite direct from the Catskill Mountains where he is riding out the COVID-19 pandemic. The issue hits newsstands June 26.

Despite a career as a classically trained thespian, Rhys' sights were always set on American television. "I had seen *The Sopranos* and knew the Golden Age of television was starting to emerge," he says. "People were making these little one-hour movies every week. Being on the medium was my big aspiration." He landed his first American television role in the 2006 ABC series, *Brothers & Sisters*, and the rest is history.

Robert Downey Jr. was initially slotted for the role of Perry Mason, but due to a scheduling conflict, Rhys was cast in the coveted role (Downey Jr. and his wife Susan Downey originated the project and remain executive producers). In the new *emmy* cover story, "**His American Way**," Rhys recalls that his first experience with the character was through his grandfather, who watched reruns of the original 1957 legal drama starring Raymond Burr. "All I remembered was that there was always some big confession at the end," says Rhys. "My grandfather was like, 'He did it again!'"

In comparison to the original *Perry Mason*—which director and executive producer Tim Van Patten describes as "very procedural in nature"—Rhys brings his heart to the role. "Rhys' Perry is more a weary, wary backroom fixer than a polished officer of the court," says Van Patten. "You feel Perry's journey, and you feel his sadness," adds Rhys. "He fought in the war where he suffered a great injustice. So now if he sees something that's unjust, it rankles him; and he has to do something about it."

Joining the project meant that, for the first time in his 23-year TV and movie career, Rhys would be No. 1 on the call sheet as well as executive producer. Van Patten says Rhys stepped up to the role of leading man. "He's totally prepared, totally professional, and you can feel his passion and positive energy. He just leaves it all on the floor and embraces everybody in the process. It really had an inspirational effect on the cast and crew because they had someone to rally around."

In the midst of the current public health crisis, Rhys and his partner Keri Russell are passing the time by binge-watching *Narcos* on Netflix. "We keep saying we're going

to do *Game of Thrones* at some point, but it seems like Everest to us,” says Rhys. While the actor has been at home, he has been home-schooling three kids. “My parents were teachers, and I’d be such a glib little brat to them,” he says. “But now my respect for them has skyrocketed.”

Additional feature highlights from the new issue include:

- In “**Will and Grace Love Lucy**,” *emmy* talks to the cast and crew of *Will & Grace* about a special episode paying homage to their iconic predecessor, *I Love Lucy*.
- With COVID-19 keeping television viewers behind closed doors, marketers are taking to Twitter, TikTok and YouTube to reach their audiences. In “**Behind the Cyber Curtain**,” *emmy* looks at how *Space Force*, *Little Fires Everywhere* and *Upload* are promoting their shows using social media.
- *Emmy* talks with Loren Bouchard, creator and showrunner of *Bob’s Burgers*, about some of his new, upcoming projects. “**Beyond Burgers**” takes a peek at Bouchard’s work on two new animated series as well as a *Bob’s Burgers* movie.

About *emmy*

Emmy, the official publication of the Television Academy, goes behind the scenes of the industry for a unique insider’s view. It showcases the scope of television and profiles the people who make TV happen, from the stars of top shows to the pros behind the cameras, covering programming trends and advances in technology. Honored consistently for excellence, *emmy* is a six-time Maggie Award winner as Best Trade Publication in Communications or the Arts and has collected 52 Maggies from the Western Publishing Association. *Emmy* is available on selected newsstands and at [TelevisionAcademy.com](https://www.televisionacademy.com) for single print and digital copies as well as subscriptions.

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