

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**ETHAN HAWKE TELLS *EMMY*[®] HE WAS DESTINED TO PLAY JOHN BROWN IN SHOWTIME'S *THE GOOD LORD BIRD***

(**NOHO ARTS DISTRICT, Calif.** — Sept. 10, 2020) — It was the pull of history that drew Ethan Hawke to his role in the new Showtime limited series *The Good Lord Bird*. In the latest edition of *emmy*, the award-winning official publication of the Television Academy, Hawke talks about how his life and career led him to this project that fosters a serious conversation about life and liberty. The issue hits newsstands Sept. 11.

Hawke's friends describe him as a renaissance man, as he's an accomplished actor, artist, writer, musician and documentarian; but television has not been a frequent outlet for his creativity. "I used my 20s and 30s to learn a lot about acting. Then I turned 40, and I started working my ass off," he says. Although Hawke has extensive film credits, his TV appearances can be counted on one hand.

James McBride's 2013 novel *The Good Lord Bird* tells the reimagined story of real-life white abolitionist John Brown from the point of view of Onion, a 14-year-old slave boy—played by Joshua Caleb Johnson—who is passing as a girl. A camera operator on the 2016 film *The Magnificent Seven* introduced Hawke to the book, noting that he looked like Brown. Asked to describe the character and the tone of the book, Hawke says, "Imagine if you took *Huckleberry Finn* and Huck is now a cross-dressing African-American kid, and crazy Jim is now crazy John Brown."

In the *emmy* cover story "**Liberty Bound**," Hawke says, "Not to be corny, but this job I kind of felt like I'd been preparing for my whole life. It's a strange thing with the business—sometimes things fall into place, and sometimes they just don't. This thing just fell into place." McBride describes a much lengthier process, which included Hawke pedaling on a bike to the author's church before wowing him with his enthusiasm for the National Book Award-winning novel. "There were other people who wanted to do it," says McBride, "but Ethan was the guy who really put his reputation on the line and brought [producer] Jason Blum to the party. He saw it all the way through."

Some performers might have found it difficult to give a voice to a character who historically has been viewed as a half-crazed sermonizing zealot as often as he has been hailed as an American hero who went all-out to end slavery. Hawke wondered, "A guy who rides down to Kansas and starts a fight with anybody who wants to own a slave ... what does a guy like that speak like?" He credits his vocal inspiration to his grandfather, Howard L. Green, who "... had this way of talking to everyone. He was a big Christian in his own way; but he made up his own version of Christianity to work for him, just like John Brown."

The story of John Brown brings to light a difficult conversation about the Civil War and slavery. “We don’t want to talk about this period in U.S. history because it’s so hurtful, so upsetting,” Hawke says. “We don’t want to think about it, look hard at it. [*The Good Lord Bird*] deals with such an important subject, such a serious American conversation, but with so much love and wit.” In the current climate, the project echoes conversations being had today. “This series gives voice to something we’re all struggling with—the inequality in our country. It is coming at a moment when it’s what people want to be talking about.”

Additional feature highlights from the new issue include:

- In “**Flying High**,” *emmy* speaks with Kaley Cuoco about the upcoming HBO Max series *The Flight Attendant* and her role on the long-running CBS hit *The Big Bang Theory*, which cemented her status as a comedic leading lady.
- After 10 seasons and 20 years, HBO’s *Curb Your Enthusiasm* is a wildly popular series known for pushing the comedic envelope. In “**Repeat Offender**,” *emmy* talks to cast regular/executive producer Jeff Garlin, executive producer/director Jeff Schaffer, and former executive producers/directors Larry Charles and Robert Weide about 20 of their favorite moments on the show.
- As *Monday Night Football* approaches its golden anniversary, *emmy* explores the storied history and evolution of the primetime sports show. “**First and Ten**” takes a look at 10 unforgettable moments in the 50-year history of *Monday Night Football*.

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 for single print and digital copies as well as subscriptions.

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