

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**BLINDSPOTTING CO-CREATORS DAVEED DIGGS AND RAFAEL CASAL TALK TRANSITIONING INDEPENDENT FILM INTO POIGNANT STARZ SERIES IN *EMMY***

(**NOHO ARTS DISTRICT**, Calif. — June 2, 2021) — Fresh off his Tony and Grammy wins for his work as Thomas Jefferson in *Hamilton*, Daveed Diggs had no interest in creating a series based on his critically acclaimed independent film *Blindspotting*. Diggs and co-creator Rafael Casal talk to *emmy* about what ultimately inspired them to work with Lionsgate on the innovative new comedy premiering on Starz June 13. The award-winning, official publication of the Television Academy hit newsstands June 1.

When the film *Blindspotting*—an insightful exploration of racism, policing and gentrification—premiered in 2018, there was immediate interest from Lionsgate in continuing the story through a television series; but Diggs and Casal were initially not on board. In the *emmy* cover story “**Made You Look**,” Diggs shares how the series evolved. “Lionsgate said, ‘We think there’s a TV show here’; and we were like, ‘No, we’ve told this story. We’re artists, and we don’t repeat things. We’re moving on; there’s nothing else here,’” Diggs says. “You make an indie film, and it’s your darling,” adds Casal. “If I make one thing truly from the heart, I don’t want to mess with it.”

Lionsgate had proposed that a *Blindspotting* series would continue following the film’s male leads, Miles (Diggs) and Collin (Casal), but the duo wanted to explore another character. “We were happy with the ambiguity that Miles and Collin were left at,” Diggs says. “But when we were shooting, when we were editing, we really wished there was more of Ashley. We were so mad we couldn’t fit that into the film.” Ashley is portrayed in the film, and now the series, by Emmy winner Jasmine Cephas Jones ([#FreeRayshawn](#), *Hamilton*).

The result is a totally unique series, reimagining traditional sitcoms by adding spoken-word and dance interludes. It picks up six months after the film ends and focuses on Ashley; Miles’ sister, Trish (Jaylen Barron); and his mother, Rainey, played by Emmy- and Oscar-winning actress Helen Hunt. Hunt, who was a fan of the movie, connected with Casal after reaching out on Twitter. “Helen is absolutely amazing,” says Jones. “She was so supportive, and it was amazing to share the screen with her and sometimes go toe-to-toe with her. To have her look at us as her peers was really awesome.”

While viewers should not expect to see Diggs and Casal reprise their film roles (Casal makes an appearance, but Diggs was simultaneously working on TNT's *Snowpiercer*), the co-executive producers are actively involved in the storytelling. "For us, television is all about world-building, and I felt that the world we had established in the movie could support a bunch of other stories," says Casal.

Additional feature highlights from the new issue include:

- For the co-creators of Showtime's *Moonbase 8*, Fred Armisen, Tim Heidecker and John C. Reilly, the show was a vehicle to work together in the same orbit. In "**Above and Beyond**" the talented trio shares how the stars aligned on the comedy series featuring inept astronauts training for a mission to the moon at a NASA lunar simulation camp.
- In "**Their Opening Moves**" the creative forces behind Netflix's *The Queen's Gambit* take readers behind the scenes of the show's opening sequence and its importance in kickstarting the story while stirring interest and emotion from viewers.
- As a girl, Jean Smart dreamed of being Phyllis Diller, even dressing like the iconic comic for a seventh-grade costume party. Now she is starring as a Vegas comic in the HBO Max dark comedy *Hacks*. In "**Pleased as Punch**," *emmy* talks to Smart and her costar, Hannah Einbinder, about the series and their chemistry on and off set.

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 published 12 times per year and 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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