

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**SHOWRUNNERS MIGUEL SAPOCHNIK AND RYAN CONDAL OF HBO'S *HOUSE OF THE DRAGON* TALK CREATING THE PREQUEL TO SMASH HIT *GAME OF THRONES* IN *EMMY* MAGAZINE**

(LOS ANGELES — Aug. 12, 2022) — The *Game of Thrones* saga continues with its long-awaited prequel, *House of the Dragon*, debuting on HBO and HBO Max Aug. 21. Showrunners Miguel Sapochnik and Ryan Condal talk with *emmy* about their like-minded approach to creating a show centered on strong female characters in a patriarchal society while honoring the acclaimed original. The award-winning official publication of the Television Academy is on newsstands Aug. 13.

At first, Sapochnik, a *Game of Thrones* director and executive producer, wasn't sure if he wanted to return to Westeros. But he was inspired when his wife asked, "Have you thought about making it about the women?" The Emmy Award-winning director acknowledges that *GoT* had the reputation of being a male-driven show but clarifies,

"*Game of Thrones* has [some] really strong female characters. It also [depicts the] mistreatment of these female characters. The perception has followed it—at times, wrongly so."

When HBO sent the script, developed from George R.R. Martin's book *Fire & Blood* by writer Ryan Condal, to Sapochnik, he was intrigued. Set 200 years before *GoT*, the narrative chronicles the implosion of House Targaryen. It was a light bulb moment for the director, who suddenly thought, "Why don't we make a show about the patriarchy ... and the fact they don't want women to rule?" It turned out Condal was on the same wavelength. As a result, both men would become showrunners, a directing/writing duo rather than two scribes.

In "**Heirs to the Throne**," Sapochnik and Condal talk with *emmy* about creating *House of the Dragon*, a prequel to a widely praised predecessor. Condal believes it is the first to screen because it's an adaptation of Martin's work rather than an expanded universe. Martin had even suggested Condal adapt it four years earlier. "I think this particular story is closest to him because there's a lot of his love of

English medieval history in there,” Condal explains, while adding, “[and] it leaves a lot of opportunity for invention.”

Centered around House Targaryen, the story begins during a time of peace but with a struggle brewing over who will succeed King Viserys: His impulsive brother Daemon or daughter Rhaenyra and her long-ago friend, Alicent Hightower. “We’re trying ... if not to replicate [*GoT*], then certainly to honor it in what we’re doing,” Condal says. “We want this to feel like a different time and place.” As he explains, a civil war is being fought among the family itself.”

It’s also a war along gender lines. Eve Best, who plays Princess Rhaenys, recalls Sapochnik telling her at their very first meeting, “The heart of the show is my line, ‘Men would sooner put the realm to the torch than see a woman ascend the Iron Throne.’” Emma D’Arcy, who plays Rhaenyra, adds, “For a woman to take power, you have to convince the electorate and the supporters and the allies that a woman is not ‘other.’ So, the question of the show is: How do you do that?” Olivia Cooke, who plays Alicent Hightower, points out that despite *GoT* often being perceived as a male show, the female characters “ended up as nuanced, fully drawn women.” And *House of the Dragon* is ready to explore this self-realization and power.

As for following in the footsteps of such an illustrious show, Rhys Ifans, who plays Ser Otto Hightower, says the cast does not feel much pressure. “We might have if we were doing the sequel, but we weren’t—we were doing the *prequel*.” Paddy Considine, a hardcore fan of *GoT*, agrees with his castmate. “I can’t be intimidated by the weight of expectation. I can’t carry the weight of that show on my shoulders. I’m just there to play the part of the king.”

Additional feature highlights from the new issue include:

In “**Her Happy Place**,” *emmy* talks with multi-talented Niecy Nash, star of *The Rookie: Feds* (a spinoff of ABC’s *The Rookie*.) The actress-producer shares her thoughts on playing a 48-year-old high school guidance counselor turned FBI Academy hopeful—the oldest trainee in Quantico.

The latest TV project from Marvel, *She-Hulk: Attorney at Law*, stars Tatiana Maslany but is different from its predecessors—it’s a half-hour comedy. In “**Don’t Sell Her Short**,” the award-winning actress talks with *emmy* about “breaking up the genre in a way that feels special and feminine and very cool.”

With a career spanning over 70 years, Betty White earned the adoration of countless fans. In “**Knocking at Her Door**,” *emmy* speaks with the executive director of Julien’s Auctions about the three-day event where most of White’s personal possessions hit the auction block, including her home’s yellow door.

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 technological advances. 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 for single print and digital copies as well as subscriptions.

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