

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****EMMY TALKS TO ANGELA BASSETT ABOUT HER ROLE ON FOX'S 9-1-1 AND THE SERIES THE NETWORK BUILT FOR HER**

(NOHO ARTS DISTRICT, Calif. — Feb. 19, 2021) — Landing a starring role on a network show would be a major achievement for most performers, but when you're Emmy Award nominee and Golden Globe winner actress Angela Bassett, networks build entire series around you. Bassett, now in her fourth season as the star and an executive producer of Fox's *9-1-1*, spoke to *emmy* about anchoring the popular action drama. The award-winning official publication of the Television Academy hits newsstands Feb. 23.

Bassett has always looked for meaningful roles and brought her signature strength and self-respect to every project she has taken on. When she began her acting career, she had a bachelor's degree in African American studies from Yale and a master's in fine arts from the legendary Yale School of Drama and was determined to avoid jobs that demeaned Black women. "There I was, living in my \$213-a-month apartment and thinking, 'If I don't take this role, I'm at the unemployment office,'" she says. "But even though I was just starting out, I knew I [could not] be so desperate. I thought, 'I'd rather stand in that line than take something that would degrade Black women or the Black female experience.'"

It was Bassett's gravitas as a performer that drew the attention of showrunner Ryan Murphy, who offered her a role in *American Horror Story: Coven*. In 2014 she received an Emmy nomination for *Coven* and remained with the *AHS* anthology for five seasons. So, it is no surprise that when Murphy approached her to star in *9-1-1*, a fast-paced ensemble about first responders in Los Angeles, she accepted the part without a completed script or a fully fleshed-out character.

According to *9-1-1* showrunner Tim Minear, before Murphy departed Fox for a production deal with Netflix, he created the series for then co-head of Fox Television Dana Walden. "We were walking around the lot," Minear recalls, "and he said, 'I had this idea about a show we should call *9-1-1*, and there can be a 911 operator. And I think that Angela Bassett should be a cop. I think America wants to see Angela Bassett in a uniform.' We built the show around her. She was on the billboard in our heads from Day One."

In the *emmy* cover story "**Always and Only,**" Bassett's costar Aisha Hinds says she is the only actress who could do justice to the role of LAPD patrol sergeant Athena Grant. "She's taking on a character of extreme complexities, making infinitesimal choices throughout her performance," says Hinds, who stars as Athena's best friend, Hen, "which gives it the nuances to find a home in the hearts

of viewers. This is a Black woman in the world, working as a police officer in Los Angeles in an interracial marriage. She's so layered in this role."

After an extended hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic, *9-1-1* started shooting season four in mid-October; and Bassett is happy to be back to work. This year the sought-after actress also reprises her role as a CIA director in the next *Mission: Impossible* film and returns to Wakanda for *Black Panther 2*. "To perform is a reason why you say yes," says Bassett. "To find your passion when you're young and [years later] still be in the game? And to be respected by others and thought of as a professional and a person with class? I just think it's sacred."

### **Additional feature highlights from the new issue include:**

- *Emmy* talks with *Ted Lasso* stars Jason Sudeikis and Hannah Waddingham about the success of their hit show. "**Cheer for Perfection**" reveals how the Apple TV+ comedy has won over viewers during a difficult year with stories of hope and compassion.
- In "**Transition Game**" *emmy* explores how NBA players, including Chris Paul, Kevin Durant, Charles Barkley, Blake Griffin and Dwyane Wade, are moving seamlessly from the court to the set with TV production deals across a range of genres.
- What started as a personal collection of taxidermy nearly a century ago, has evolved into one of the largest animal prop rental companies in the West. In "**Animal Kingdom**" *emmy* shares a photo essay from the North Hollywood headquarters of Bischoff's Taxidermy & Animal FX.

### **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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