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'Legends' band together to save humanity in new CW series

BY GEORGE DICKIE

It's 2166 and immortal evil madman Vandal Savage is about to achieve his goal of the total annihilation of humanity. It's up to time traveling rogue Rip Hunter to make sure that doesn't happen.

In "DC's Legends of Tomorrow," premiering Thursday, Jan. 21, on The CW, Time Master Hunter (Arthur Darville, "Doctor Who") travels 150 years into the past to assemble a carefully selected team of rogues and heroes to stop the threat. They are: billionaire scientist Ray Palmer (Brandon Routh, "Superman Returns") – aka the Atom – whose exo-suit can shrink him to miniscule size; trained assassin Sara Lance (Caity Lotz, "Mad Men"), otherwise known as the White Canary; Professor Martin Stein (Victor Garber, "Alias") and Jefferson "Jax" Jackson (Franz Drameh, "Edge of Tomorrow"), who together form the meta-human Firestorm; Leonard Snart and Mick Rory (played by former "Prison Break" co-stars Wentworth Miller and Dominic Purcell), known as Captain Cold and Heat Wave; and Kendra Saunders (Ciara Renée, "The Flash") and Carter Hall (newcomer Falk Hentschel) – aka Hawkgirl and Hawkman – many-times-reincarnated souls who can fly – and who have the critical advantage of having a spiritual connection to Savage (Danish actor Casper Crumb).

Together, the "Legends" travel back and forth through time to stop Savage's plans from being set into motion and to ultimately save the world. And ideally, that means killing Savage but since he's immortal that's a tall order.

"There's a certain set of circumstances that have to be put in play in order for him to actually die ... so he's immortal with an asterisk," explains Routh with a laugh. "But it's harder than like 'Highlander,' where if you cut off his head he's gone or

something like that. And because he's several thousand years old ... he is incredibly intelligent and great at strategy and close to getting to all the powerful people in the world and trying to destroy the world or have all the power in the world, he amasses armies and despots at his command.

"Basically, because he's been around so long he knows all the tricks of the trade of humanity, so he's very wily," he continues. "And he can also kind of sense the one or two people who can actually kill him because in the lore of the comics they're all connected and he can sense that they're around, so it's hard to sneak up on him as well."

Routh, who has experience playing superheroes through his 2006 turn as the Man of Steel and Clark Kent in "Superman Returns," borrowed a little from that character to create Roy Palmer/The Atom.

"I think every superhero has a little bit of Superman in them, they just deny it a little bit," Routh says. "For instance for Ray, Ray is not clumsy but he is very energetic and very excited and very passionate about what he does, so he comes off a little goofy because of his pure passion about his technology and about creating a suit and just even saving people, I would say. And that's what makes him create the Atom suit, is to help people and to protect them the way he couldn't protect important people in his life in the past. I mean, he makes a choice to do that."

Pictured: Caity Lotz

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JAY BOBBIN'S Q&A

POPPY MONTGOMERY



of
'Unforgettable'
Friday on A&E
Network



You've had New York as a series backdrop a lot, given "Without a Trace" previously and "Unforgettable" now. What's your take on the city?

Every time a show gets canceled, I've had to break up with New York, when my heart gets shattered. I'm like, "New York! I may not see you again for a while." And then, we're back together. Even a show I did called "The Beat," which I did with Mark Ruffalo all those years ago, filmed in New York. I was there for 15 episodes of that, so on and off, I've spent a lot of time there.

I consider myself bicoastal, because my kids are in L.A., so I travel every weekend to see them. We're only in New York (for filming) five months of the year, and to pull them out of school would be a lot.

Season 4 of "Unforgettable" opened with something of a shocker, revealing your character Carrie was still married, somewhat secretly. Were you surprised to find that out?

Oh, yeah! The writers definitely had their work cut out for them, and I think they did a really, really good job. I love (Skeet Ulrich, who played the husband), and he was such a sweetheart to work with, just a delight. He really is, and I hope if we get another season, he will come back with us and play again. It was really fun.

You've given birth to two children over the course of making "Unforgettable." What's your reflection on that?

It takes a while to get back to yourself, but I kind of loved it. This show ... two revivals and two babies, so much has happened in four seasons of "Unforgettable." It's mind-boggling to me.

Click or tap on icon for more!



JAY BOBBIN'S Q&A

BROOKE SHIELDS

OF 'FLOWER
SHOP MYSTERY:
MUM'S THE
WORD' SUNDAY
ON HALLMARK
MOVIES &
MYSTERIES



What made "Flower Shop Mystery: Mum's the Word" interest you as being your re-entry into television?

I've been doing more theater and I was writing my book ("There Was a Little Girl: The Real Story of My Mother and Me"), so it's been a couple of years, and this is a great character to be able to come back to ... and to be able to make a group of these movies.

You're also an executive producer of the "Flower Shop Mystery" franchise. How has that gone for you?

I didn't expect it at first. In this, I really wanted to try to make them be something different, and to have a creative say in the matter. It's been a real joy to be able to have opinions and to see different cuts. To be involved on the other side is a part of my brain that I hadn't had a chance to use, and I'm really enjoying it.

What do you think the general appeal of "Flower Shop Mystery" is?

It's sort of the "Murder, She Wrote" genre. I think people are really look forward to being entertained, and to have programming they can enjoy with their families ... with just enough mystery, just enough romance and just enough "feel-good." In this era we're living in, I think people are craving it.

I talk to many friends who have been watching so many of the other networks, with all their drama, and I think they're relieved to laugh a little and be able to forget the world for a while. By having female leads, a lot of (Hallmark's) shows are very empowering on that level. Mine have a real humor base to them as well, which I've just been loving playing. To me, that was really important.

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ELIZABETH BLAU

of 'Restaurant Startup' Wednesdays on
CNBC



As a restaurant owner doing the hiring, what tells you a chef has potential?

Well, I think you've got to understand their story and their background and why they've gotten into this business and what they're trying to do. If you don't feel that they've got the business acumen (then) you want to see a great partnership because I think of chefs as artists, and so just because you're a great artist and you can create good food, it doesn't mean you've got the whole business package, just like a doctor or any other professional that is just really great at what they do.

So obviously, it's the food and for me it's not so much whether it's hot or perfectly seasoned because, you know, they're not working in their own kitchen. But I think having done this and having done as many tastings as I have over the years, you can kind of just spot that talent and that raw creativity.



So ideally in your restaurant, you want a talented chef and an astute businessperson?

Yep, and then there's the third component because there's the person that's going to be in the front of the house and managing the service aspect and really the guest interface. Because if you're a busy restaurant your chef is not going to be in the dining room. So there's really those three components that go into it but oftentimes that person who represents the front of the house has that combination.



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DINKI AND DEEN

take out the fat on 'Junk Food Flip'

It should go without saying that any dish containing bacon likely is not going to be dietetic.

In Nikki Dinki's mind, those fried strips of salted, smoked pork are the biggest offenders in adding unnecessary calories, and they're exactly the type of thing she and co-host Bobby Deen are trying to replace in dishes in their series "Junk Food Flip," which returns for its second season Tuesday, Jan. 19, on Cooking Channel.

"Bacon is one of those things that people seem to always throw it on top," Dinki says, "and I think sometimes it's wonderful, it's valuable and bacon is delicious. But there are a lot of times that I look at a dish and I think 'Was there bacon in there?' ... I don't think people quite understand how many calories they're adding by ... adding those things."

In the series, Dinki and Deen visit lower-end eateries in Southern California looking to create healthful versions of decadent dishes. Frequently, that means things like beef, pork and anything fried have got to go. In the end, the restaurant owners decide whether the new version is as good as the old. If it is, it goes on the menu. If not, they get a cash prize and bragging rights.

In Tuesday's season opener, they drop in on the wrestling-themed Lucha Libre Taco Shop in San Diego to reinvent the Champion's Chicharrones Nachos, which uses fried pork rinds for nacho chips and weighs in at a whopping 2,300 calories with 169 grams of fat.

"(It is) actually the highest-caloried thing we ran into ...," Dinki says. "Besides the fun food, it was such a fun place and really just made for a really, really cool episode and a fun time. And I think one of the coolest things is that we were able to make something that was 550 calories that was comparable to what they were doing. And so it was probably the biggest (calorie difference) between doing our healthy version and their indulgent version, and we were able to cut the amount of calories and fat drastically."



What book are you currently reading?

"Currently I am reading a 'Clan of the Cave Bear' series that my mother is a huge fan of, so I finally gave in and am reading it. It is one of the longest books that I've ever read in my entire life and a little slow-moving, following early man. But it's been entertaining. ..."

What did you have for dinner last night?

"I had ramen. I still have a bit of a stomach bug so I got some nice, simple ramen. It was a good thing."

What is your next project?

"The book ('Meat on the Side Cookbook') comes out in June and so we literally just wrapped that up, which is really exciting. And now, because I'm kind of a crazy person, I already kind of have my head thinking about book two (laughs), even though book one has not come out yet. So really, I'm in the process of just kind of data-banking a lot of recipes and developing and kind of just getting back to cooking."

When was the last vacation you took, where and why?

"I was just away about three weeks ago. We were in the Cayman Islands in Grand Cayman, so it was a nice beach vacation ... I was gone for about a month, so we took a nice, needed vacation, me and my husband, and just took it easy."

Click or tap on icon for more!

COOKING
CHANNEL

LILY JAMES

How do you follow a stint on "Downton Abbey"?

If you're Lily James, you do it by playing one of the most celebrated heroines in literary history. Seen on the hugely popular PBS "Masterpiece Classic" drama as Lady Rose, the young British actress plays Natasha in a new adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's "War & Peace." A co-production of England's BBC and The Weinstein Company, the four-week saga begins Monday, Jan. 18, on no less than three U.S. networks – A&E, History and Lifetime – with Paul Dano ("Love and Mercy"), James Norton, Jim Broadbent and (just before her return in "The X-Files") Gillian Anderson also cast in the story of five families trying to ensure their futures as imperialism comes to an end in Russia.

"It was intense," James says of the newest screen incarnation of a story filmed several times previously. "It was six months, and we started in the freezing sub-temperatures and then ended with the White Nights, which was beautiful. It never got dark. We were filming in the most incredible locations and the cast was gigantic, so it was a real production. And I was doing press for (the title role in Disney's live-action) 'Cinderella' at the same time, so I felt very schizophrenic."

Admitting she was "very naive" about "War & Peace" when she landed the part of Natasha, James recalls, "I knew it was Tolstoy, but I never thought, 'Oh, I'm going to read this soon.' It wasn't on my priority list, yet when I read the script and the lines, I just was blown away. I fell in love with Natasha, her joy and her spirit and this openness about her that never falters, despite the journey she goes on ... which is so bleak. And reading the book was a whole other experience in itself. The story carries you away."

James merges classic drama with another genre in the theatrical movie "Pride and Prejudice and Zombies," opening Feb. 5, and she'll resurface on "Downton Abbey" in the series finale March 6. She deems "War & Peace" one of her career high points thus far, reasoning that "you're drawn into each and every character. The relationships are so rich, and it's about family and war and love, all those things that are universal and that everyone can relate to."



Birthdate: April 5, 1989

Birthplace: Esher, Surrey, England

Current residence: London

Marital status: Single (but dating "Doctor Who" actor Matt Smith)

Other television work includes: "Downton Abbey," "Secret Diary of a Call Girl," "Just William"

Movie work includes: "Pride and Prejudice and Zombies," "Burnt," "Cinderella," "Last Girls," "Broken," "Wrath of the Titans"

On the emotional depth demanded of "War & Peace": "You need that. It can't just be light and airy, because it's not. (Natasha) tries to kill herself, and even in the openness of her, I wanted the sense that there's a danger attached to that. I found that intoxicating, and I found that in reading the book, you always knew life wasn't going to be easy for her. She operates in the extreme, and I hope I've been able to get that across."

CELEBRITY PROFILE

GEOFFREY ZAKARIAN



- Born July 25, 1959.

- The Worcester, Massachusetts, native went to college as an economics major and, after graduating from the University of Massachusetts, planned to get a master's degree in business administration. While visiting France, he fell in love with food and decided he wanted to be a chef.

- In 1983, he Graduated from The Culinary Institute of America.

- He landed a job at Le Cirque after graduating in 1981, working for master restaurateur Sirio Maccioni. When he first applied for the job, he was told there were no openings – until he offered to work without pay. In five years, he worked his way up from Pastry Sous to Chef de Cuisine under Chef Alain Sailhac.

- In 1987, he took his first turn as Executive Chef at the legendary 21 Club.

Geoffrey Zakarian is an Iron Chef, restaurateur and TV personality who can currently be seen on the latest season of Food Networks "Top 5 Restaurants."

- In 2001, Zakarian opened his first restaurant, Town, which was awarded Three Stars from The New York Times.

- He next opened Country, which was awarded a Michelin Star along with Three Stars from The New York Times.

- In 2006, Clarkson Potter published his debut book, "Geoffrey Zakarian's Town/Country," which was named Editor's Choice by The New York Times Book Review and was celebrated as "...one of the best cookbooks of 2006."

- He is an ubiquitous presence on television, whether he's giving a cooking demonstration on ABC's "The Chew," sharing favorite dishes on Food Network's "The Best Thing I Ever Made," judging contests on Food Network's

"Chopped" or battling other chefs – and the clock – on "Iron Chef America."

- In 2011, he won the 4th season of "The Next Iron Chef: Super Chefs," earning him the title of Iron Chef.

- In 2014, he assumed the Role of Chairman of the food rescue organization City Harvest to lead its Food Council in fighting hunger in NYC.

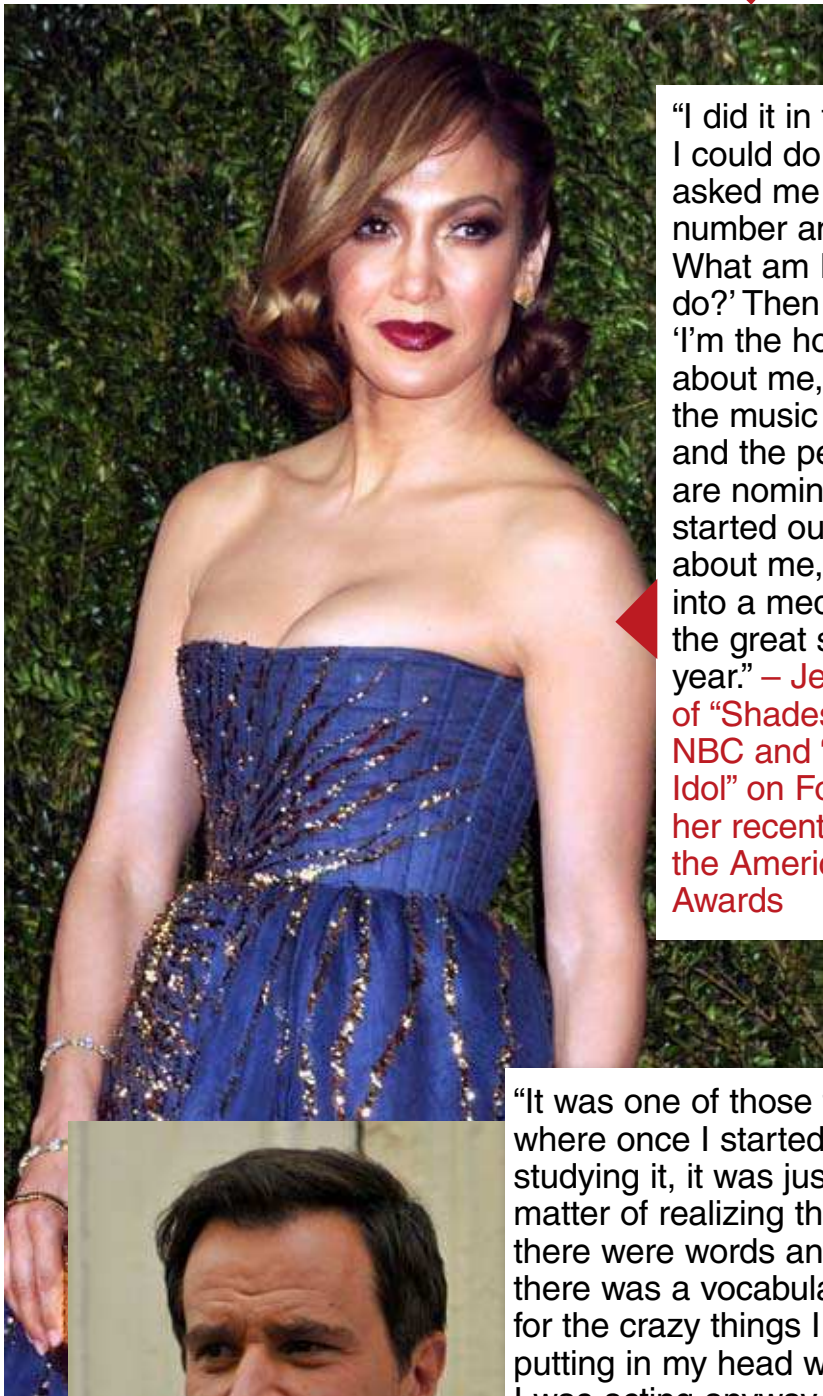
- He and Sunny Anderson are currently hosting season two of "Top 5 Restaurants" on Food Network.

- He has three children and cooks them breakfast every weekday.

Click or tap on icon for more!



WHAT'S NEWS



"I did it in the way that I could do it. They asked me to do a number and I thought, 'What am I gonna do?' Then I thought, 'I'm the host. It's not about me, it's about the music of the year and the people who are nominated.' So I started out like it was about me, then I went into a medley of all the great songs of the year." – **Jennifer Lopez** of "Shades of Blue" on NBC and "American Idol" on Fox, about her recent hosting of the American Music Awards



"It was one of those things where once I started really studying it, it was just a matter of realizing that there were words and there was a vocabulary for the crazy things I was putting in my head when I was acting anyway. 'Oh, there's a term for what I do anyway? Oh, interesting. OK.' And that was just a few things but many of the wonderful things I learned I didn't realize helped you live truthfully in an imaginary circumstance." – **Tim DeKay** of "Second Chance" on Fox, on studying acting in college at Rutgers University



"There's nothing more fun than that. Last year, when Kelly (Clarkson) came back up on the stage, we all reminisced about that first season ... and I remember the first day I really spent with Carrie Underwood on the street outside the theater in downtown L.A. You look at the growth and the success, and that's a pretty incredible context." – **Ryan Seacrest** of "American Idol" on Fox, about trying to get alumni of the show back for the current, final season

WHAT'S TRENDING

ON DVRs



Brooke Shields of "Flower Shop Mystery: Mum's the Word" on Hallmark Movies & Mysteries

"I've watched 'Better Call Saul' and 'Breaking Bad,' and after that, I watch whatever I can figure out (to record). I also watch 'Transparent,' 'UnREAL' and 'Downton Abbey' ... I'm sort of in that world."



Hoda Kotb of "Today" on NBC

"I have 'Nashville' on mine. I have 'Empire' on mine. I have 'Saturday Night Live.' I have '60 Minutes' and an occasional special of some sort."



Rita Moreno of "Nina's World" on Sprout

"I love to catch up on 'Homeland' and 'Madam Secretary' when I can, and a favorite show that I've always gotten a lot of good laughs from is HBO's 'Getting On.' Ironically, I got a call from my agent to do a special guest appearance on this season's finale – and of course, I adore Laurie Metcalf even more, now that I've worked with her on the show."



Adam Savage of "MythBusters" on Discovery Channel

"We don't watch as much television as we should, my wife and I. We've recently been watching Aziz's (Ansari) show, 'Master of None.' I think it's brilliant. The two shows that have blown me away recently are 'Master of None' and 'Catastrophe,' and what I love about both of those is dramatically they've found a completely new space for drama that doesn't conform to where you expect it to go, and I get really excited by that. Of course, I'm obsessed with 'Better Call Saul.' I've watched 'Breaking Bad' all the way through twice."



'BILLIONS'

shows its worth
to Showtime as
drama series
debuts

Paul Giamatti stars in
"Billions," premiering Sunday
on Showtime.
Story on next page



BY JAY BOBBIN

One is a dedicated U.S. attorney, the other a self-assured hedge-fund titan ... and an insider-trading probe is about to make their worlds collide.

Premiering Sunday, Jan. 17, the Showtime drama series "Billions" stars two Emmy-winning veterans of cable: Paul Giamatti ("John Adams") as nose-to-grindstone lawyer Chuck Rhoades, and Damian Lewis ("Homeland") as charismatic financial wizard Bobby "Axe" Axelrod. When several questionable cases reveal Axe as their common link, Rhoades goes after him. Complicating the pursuit is the fact that Rhoades' wife (Maggie Siff, "Sons of Anarchy") is an employee and close confidante of Axe, whose savvy and loyal spouse is played by Malin Akerman ("Trophy Wife").

With financial columnist and "Too Big to Fail" author Andrew Ross Sorkin among its creators and executive producers (along with Brian Koppelman and David Levien), and Neil Burger ("Divergent," "Limitless") as another executive producer and the director of the first two episodes, "Billions" brings its two main protagonists together on screen only occasionally – as with a hushed but heated exchange between them in the debut.

"I cover this world, so I know what the perception is and what you read on the page about this world," Sorkin says, "but when you get inside the room, of course, they become these much more layered, complex people. We spent a lot of time, both with people that I've covered over the years in the hedge-fund world (and) people in the legal world. So we sat at a lot of tables, and tried to spend a lot of time really digging in and getting under who these people are and what motivates them, what drives them ... what is this really all about."

Though Axe displays a strong attitude, Lewis maintains much of his "Billions" performance is achieved "by

costume. We all decided, just because this guy has got lots of money, why should he walk around in \$4,000 Brioni suits. Why doesn't he just wear jeans, sneakers, T-shirts? He wears a necklace. He's got a little Celtic cross on him, which you don't see, but all of these things just help make him be a guy from his neighborhood who happens to have a lot of money. And that empowers him.

"But I think it's important to stress (that) Bobby, he's one of these guys who is quite empowered by a sense of himself anyway, without the money," Lewis adds. "I think the money adds, obviously, but (we're) just trying to tap into that neighborhood (feeling)."

In his first turn as a weekly series star, Giamatti may not have as flashy a role as the visibly determined Rhoades, but the actor gets his moments of controlled ferocity – particularly in talking about justice and the quest for it. (Just watch him dress down the owner of a dog that has befouled a public walkway in Episode 3.)

"I'm finding that, potentially, there's the best of both worlds of theater and movies happening in TV," Giamatti reasons. "I get to constantly rework the character, but it's different material every time that I'm reworking the character on. In theater, I'm doing the same thing every night. It's fascinating, and so far, it's terrific.

"I keep having this funny conundrum of, 'Do I want to know the specifics of what's going to happen?' or, 'Am I enjoying learning it as it happens?' The kind of joy of that is really unique, too. I've never felt that, so the whole thing is super-interesting to me. And a lot of actors have said to me, 'You are going to enjoy doing TV if it's a good show. It's going to be something you're going to just like, (that) you are really going to have a good time doing.' It's just been so much fun so far."

Click or tap on icon for more!





The quality of 'Mercy'

Mary Elizabeth Winstead stars in "Mercy Street,"
premiering Sunday on PBS.

Story on next page

'MERCY STREET' brings Civil War down to its most human level on PBS

BY JOHN CROOK

A new historical drama series re-examines the Civil War from a fresh perspective as "Mercy Street" premieres Sunday, Jan. 17, on PBS (check local listings).

The fact-based drama opens in the spring of 1862, in Alexandria, Va., where the lives of two nurses – New England abolitionist Mary Phinney (Mary Elizabeth Winstead) and Southern belle Emma Green (Hannah James) – intersect within Mansion House, a hotel run by Emma's family that has been transformed into a Union Army hospital. Since the facility also houses some wounded Confederate soldiers, it's a vibrant microcosm of ordinary Americans on both sides of the conflict.

"The ambition of the show was to take this defining period in American history, but to explore it through an entirely different prism," explains executive producer David W. Zucker ("The Good Wife"). "The key decision was to bring the war down to a personal level. We are dealing with the people living in this community and seeing the war that is happening all around and about them."

Zucker says another member of the creative team, former "ER" executive producer and scribe David Zabel, has compared this approach to "Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead," Tom Stoppard's brilliant comedy that looks at "Hamlet" from the perspective of two minor characters.

The diverse ensemble includes Josh Radnor ("How I Met Your Mother") as a visionary civilian surgeon, Norbert Leo Butz ("Bloodline") as a by-the-book Army surgeon, Jack Falahee ("How to Get Away With Murder") as a Confederate spy, and Gary Cole ("Veep") as the owner of Mansion House, who is trying to play both sides against the middle for his own profit.



Pictured: Mary Elizabeth Winstead

Winstead, who was cast as Mary Phinney just days before filming began, says she was drawn to the character's forward-thinking sensibilities.

"She had absolutely no qualms at all about saying what was on her mind or doing what she wanted to do," the actress says. "The more I read about her and about other women of the time, I realized that there were so many women like that. It was a movement at the time, so many feminists who were fighting for the rights of women as well as the rights of African-Americans."

Among the surprises, Winstead adds, was the discovery that Phinney and her fellow nurses had to fight for a place in the male-dominated hospital.

"You would think they would want all the help they could get, but the women who asked to be allowed to help often were turned away and treated with disdain," she says. "The doctors and surgeons who were running the hospital had the attitude 'But what can you do? You're just a woman.' These were really the first female nurses of our time, because they said, 'No, I am going to come here and I am going to lend some help, because you need it.' They would not take no for an answer."

Click or tap on icon for more!



CAVALLI

explores TV from the inside on 'Planet Primetime'

BY GEORGE DICKIE



Pictured: Karla Cavalli

Ask Karla Cavalli about her role as host of Travel Channel's new series "Planet Primetime" and she'll readily admit she's a guinea pig.

"Oh, without a doubt, a thousand percent," the actress, dancer and self-described pop-culture addict says. "I am a guinea pig because I don't know that anyone else in the world has actually done kind of some of the things that I have had the opportunity to experience, which were really incredible but also terrifying a lot of times."

What she's doing in the 14-episode half-hour series, which premieres with back-to-back episodes on Tuesday, Jan. 19, is exploring some of the most popular TV shows around the world from the inside, actually appearing on them, learning bits of the native language and performing things that can take her well out of her comfort zone.

Like, for instance, ice skating in Russia with Olympian Maxim Shabalin on a show called "Ice Age."

"I had to learn how to ice skate and do a two-minute full routine with him in about three days with very little rehearsal and I hadn't been on the ice since I was 12 years old maybe," she says.

How did she do?

"I will pat myself on the back and say I did really well," Cavalli says. "I was really beyond impressed with myself

and really proud of myself. Because oftentimes on 'Planet Primetime,' I'm not given necessarily a lot of time. So whereas competitors who are on the show on a weekly basis get a week and 12 hours a day of rehearsal in order to nail a two-minute routine, I'm given like an hour a day for three days to try to work it out and look good. And the pressure, I think, that I put on myself is making sure that I represent the network, that I represent my family and I represent the country in a really positive light. And I want to perform well."

The series also visits countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Israel and India, as well as the location for the premiere episode, Tokyo, where Cavalli appeared on the long-running game show "Gaki No Tsukai." But in order to gain an understanding of what makes Japanese laugh, she first made a stop at that country's famous NSC comedy school.

Turns out the Japanese love slapstick.

"In Tokyo, everything was so perfect," Cavalli says. "They live in this society that really is immaculately clean, it's very regimented, everybody knows their position and their job and it's formal and polite and lovely. And then their television is oftentimes the total opposite of that. So I found that to be really fascinating about Japan. They're really living vicariously, watching through their small screens as these comedians get really, really silly, which is the opposite of the formality of the country."

Click or tap on icon for more!



The deadpan 'Angie Tribeca' spoofs police procedurals

BY GEORGE DICKIE

It's been more than three decades since the short-lived cop show parody "Police Squad!" graced the small screen. A worthy descendant in the same vein will try to make a more successful go of it beginning this week on TBS.

"Angie Tribeca," premiering Sunday, Jan. 17, with all 10 episodes of its first season, is a satire of police procedurals with the soul of "Airplane!" or the aforementioned 1982 Leslie Nielsen sitcom. And that becomes evident in the names of some of the characters.

Created by Steve and Nancy Carell ("The Office"), the half-hour comedy stars Rashida Jones ("Parks and Recreation," "The Office") as the title character, a lone-wolf LAPD detective who is not thrilled to be paired with her new partner, J Geils (Hayes MacArthur, "Go On"). Assisting them in their investigations are Dr. Monica Scholls – or Dr. Scholls – the robotic medical examiner played by Andree Vermeulen ("FCU: Fact Checkers Unit"). There is also the squad's apoplectic captain, Chet Atkins (Jere Burns, "Breaking Bad") and fellow detective Danny Tanner (Deon Cole, "black-ish").

With tongue planted firmly in cheek, they take on Los Angeles' toughest cases, from a ventriloquist's murder to a rash of baker suicides.

"The tone of something just depends on how you play it," explains Vermeulen, no stranger to satire from her days with the Chicago improv troupe Upright Citizens Brigade,



Pictured: Rashida Jones

"so you could read the same sentence five different ways and we've just chosen to play things very seriously.

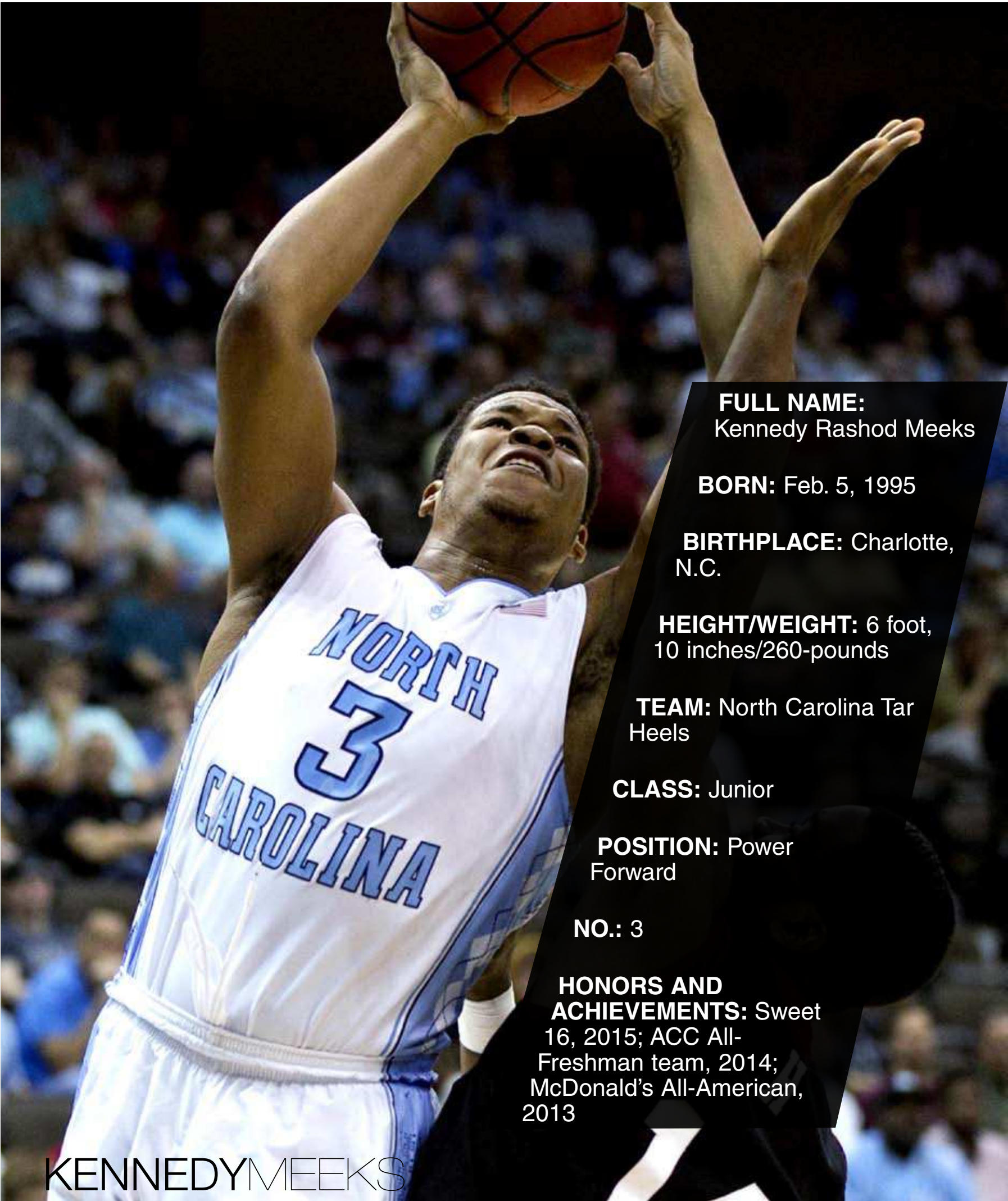
"There's a scene between Rashida and I," she continues, "where one of our detectives played by Hayes MacArthur, he's gone rogue ... and he's decided that he's going to be a lifeguard and (we) can't get him back from the beach. And Rashida and I have a very serious conversation where I ask how bad it is and she very seriously says, 'He pooped in the sand and covered it like a cat.' And I go, 'Oh, I see.' Like played so seriously but we're saying the most ridiculous things."

Jones, of course, is no stranger to saying ridiculous things with a straight face, having done that for five seasons on the Emmy-winning mockumentary "The Office." That and the fact that she knew Steve Carell from that NBC series made her a natural fit for "Angie."

"She's just got sort of a ... dry, down-to-earth delivery where she can play this kind of deadpan satire where you take everything really seriously," showrunner Ira Ungerleider says. "I think you have to be not afraid to play everything super straight and I think she really gets this genre, which Peter Graves and Leslie Nielsen did so well, which is play everything absolutely straight and let the absurdity speak for itself but don't point at the absurdity and don't acknowledge it. So the directive was basically none of the cast knows they're in a comedy, and so she sort of got that right away."

Click or tap on icon for more!





FULL NAME:
Kennedy Rashod Meeks

BORN: Feb. 5, 1995

BIRTHPLACE: Charlotte,
N.C.

HEIGHT/WEIGHT: 6 foot,
10 inches/260-pounds

TEAM: North Carolina Tar
Heels

CLASS: Junior

POSITION: Power
Forward

NO.: 3

**HONORS AND
ACHIEVEMENTS:** Sweet
16, 2015; ACC All-
Freshman team, 2014;
McDonald's All-American,
2013

KENNEDYMEEKS



BY DAN LADD

KENNEDY MECKS

The North Carolina Tar Heels haven't won a National Championship since 2009, but they're a pre-season pick by many to win it all this season. To do so, they're going to need a healthy Kennedy Meeks on the floor. You can see Meeks in action as he and the Tar Heels host Wake Forest, Wednesday, Jan. 20, on ESPN2.

The Tar Heels have expected the 2015-16 season to be a breakout one for their junior power forward/center who was averaging 12.3 points per game before sitting out two weeks with a knee injury. He

had just put a 25 spot on Temple before the injury.

Keeping Meeks back on the court will be key for North Carolina during the second half of the season when conference play intensifies before the post season. A healthy Meeks, along with teammate Brice Johnson, is what made the Tar Heels a top pick early on.

Meeks is solid in the paint and is one of the top offensive rebounders in college basketball. He is also catching the eye of NBA scouts

who like his rebounding and his big wingspan – which helps his defensive game. The dedication that helped him drop his weight from over 320-pounds as a Freshman to his current 260, is also impressive.

For now, the focus for Meeks should be staying healthy and helping put his team in the best position possible come March when North Carolina hopes to go further than their Sweet 16 departure last year. After that, the big man will have to decide whether to return to Chapel Hill for his Senior season, or enter the NBA draft.

THE 'FORCE' SURELY IS STILL WITH 'STAR WARS'

A long time ago in a galaxy ... oh, you know all that. Let's cut to the chase.

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens" is everything anyone could hope from a relaunch of a franchise – and given "Creed," too, that makes for a good track record for that movie phenomenon lately.

The new "Star Wars" harks back to the totally fun escapism the series originally had, as a new brigade of young warriors takes on the evil First Order, replacing the vanquished Empire. But they have very notable veteran help in Han Solo, played (of course) by Harrison Ford, and the impact of his entrance is something you should be in a packed theater to experience.

Wookiee sidekick Chewbacca (with Peter Mayhew inside the costume again) is still with him, and director J.J. Abrams and the writers also redeploy Luke Skywalker and Leia smartly, as played again by Mark Hamill – who takes a while to turn up – and Carrie Fisher. The younger actors are impressive, too, including Daisy Ridley as sort of a female Luke named Rey and John Boyega as Stormtrooper turncoat Finn.

And it doesn't stop there: Without Darth Vader around, Adam Driver ("Girls") steps in effectively as First Order superior Kylo Ren ... who has a nemesis cut from Han's cloth, Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac). Part of what's so dazzling about this latest chapter is how nicely it merges ethnicities and demographics, not to mention species. When one thinks about it, though, the "Star Wars" always have excelled on those counts.

There's even a newcomer among the robots, and early indications are that the ball-bearing-like BB-8 is an immediate audience favorite the way R2-D2 and C-3PO were the first time around.

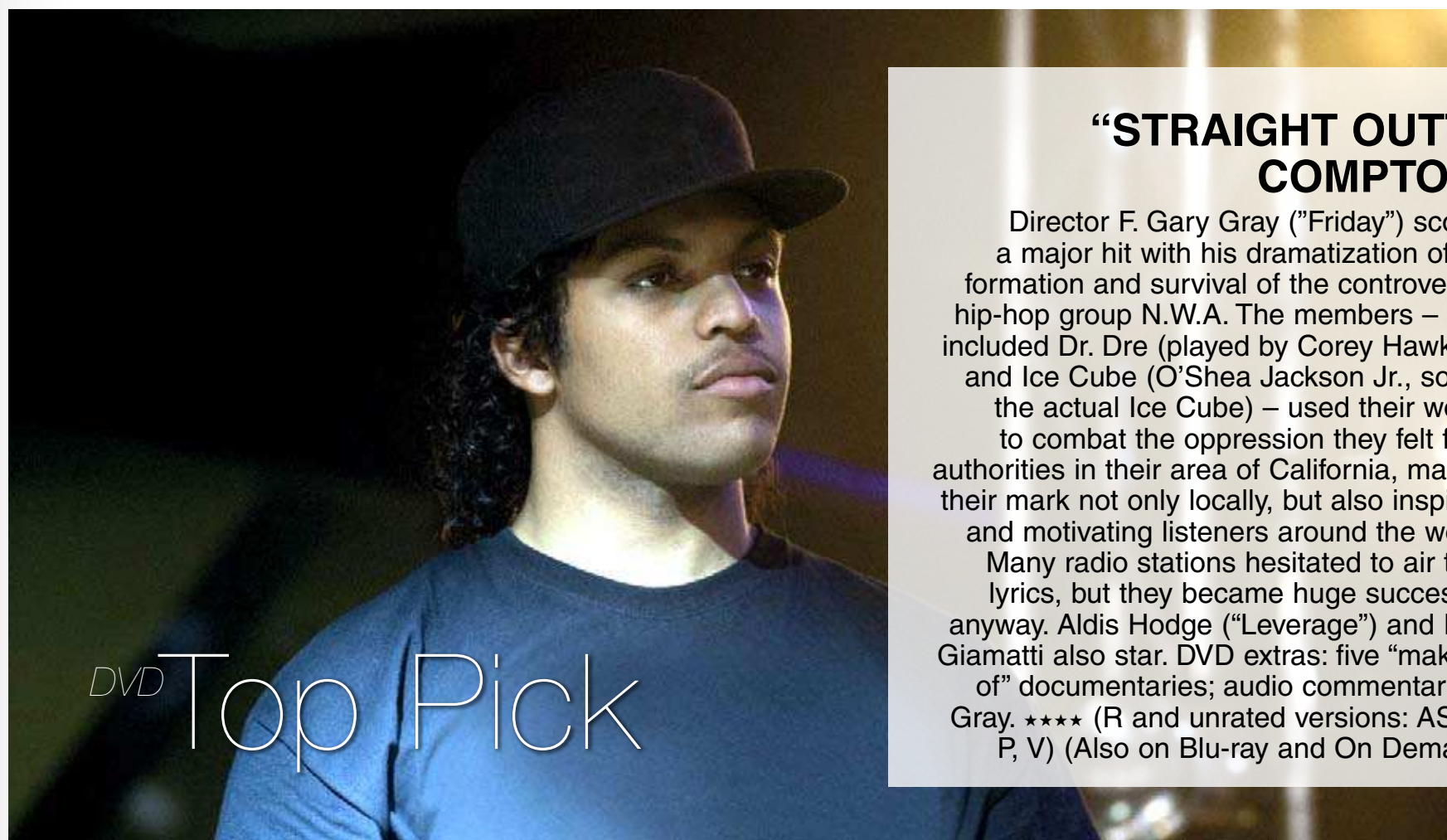
Naturally, there's also a John Williams music score, which cleverly interpolates some of the original themes while also creating something fresh for the new iteration. Enlisting that is one of the many measures of how wise Abrams has been in weaving the proven with the untested here, a skill he also displayed in launching an updated "Star Trek."

The folks at Lucasfilm and present franchise owners Disney had a massively tall order with "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," and have they ever delivered. The real joy is in the seamless mix of the nostalgic and the new, and it's simply one of the best times you'll have at the movies, now and for the foreseeable future.



Pictured: Harrison Ford

JAY BOBBIN'S MOVIE REVIEW MOVIES TO WATCH



Pictured: O'Shea Jackson Jr.

“STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON”

Director F. Gary Gray (“Friday”) scored a major hit with his dramatization of the formation and survival of the controversial hip-hop group N.W.A. The members – who included Dr. Dre (played by Corey Hawkins) and Ice Cube (O’Shea Jackson Jr., son of the actual Ice Cube) – used their words to combat the oppression they felt from authorities in their area of California, making their mark not only locally, but also inspiring and motivating listeners around the world. Many radio stations hesitated to air their lyrics, but they became huge successes anyway. Aldis Hodge (“Leverage”) and Paul Giamatti also star. DVD extras: five “making-of” documentaries; audio commentary by Gray. **** (R and unrated versions: AS, N, P, V) (Also on Blu-ray and On Demand)

UPCOMING DVD RELEASES

Coming Soon on DVD...



Pictured: Bradley Cooper

“BURNT” (Jan. 26): A troubled chef (Bradley Cooper) tries to redeem himself and return to the heights of his profession in London. (R: AS, P)

“GOOSEBUMPS” (Jan. 26): Jack Black plays R.L. Stine – the author of the title book series – in a tale of a town overrun by the monsters he created. (PG: AS)

“SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS: THE WALT DISNEY SIGNATURE COLLECTION” (Feb. 2): The classic animated feature launches a new series of enhanced releases. (Not rated) (Also on Blu-ray)

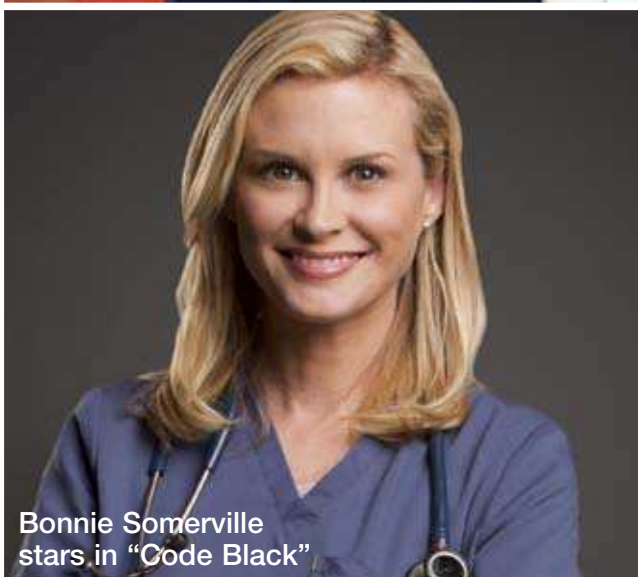
“SUFFRAGETTE” (Feb. 2): The early stages of feminism in England are recalled in director Sarah Gavron’s drama; Anne-Marie Duff and Carey Mulligan star. (R: AS, N, P, V)

“BLACK MASS” (Feb. 16): Johnny Depp stars as Boston-mob figure James “Whitey” Bulger, an informant for an FBI agent and childhood friend (Joel Edgerton). (R: AS, P, GV)

“STEVE JOBS” (Feb. 16): Michael Fassbender portrays the Apple co-founder and CEO in director Danny Boyle and writer Aaron Sorkin’s drama. (R: AS, P)



Gordon Ramsay hosts "MasterChef Celebrity Showdown"



Bonnie Somerville stars in "Code Black"



Chris Evans in "Marvel's Captain America: 75 Heroic Years"



Lester Holt moderates the Democratic Debate

SUNDAY
9 p.m. on NBC
Democratic Debate

The calendar year's first debate between those vying for the Democratic presidential nomination is presented from Charleston, S.C., and moderated by weeknight "NBC Nightly News" anchor Lester Holt. The Congressional Black Caucus Institute is a co-sponsor of the event — and as other recent debates have demonstrated, the course of questioning may be dictated by what the top news story of the specific day is. **New**

MONDAY
8 p.m. on FOX
MasterChef Celebrity Showdown

Will Gordon Ramsay be any less tough on known personalities than he is on the usual amateur chefs on his shows? The answer can be found in this new special, offering competitions between individuals or teams. Among the rivals: Gigi Hadid vs. Devon Windsor in a supermodel showdown; Terry Crews and his wife against spouses Nicole Ari Parker and Boris Kodjoe; and "Empire" co-stars Kaitlin Doubleday and Ta'Rhonda Jones cooking it out. Winnings go to charities. **New**

TUESDAY
8 p.m. on ABC
Marvel's Captain America: 75 Heroic Years

One of the most iconic characters in comics has been around a long time, and this new special salutes that run by showing how Steve Rogers and his shield-toting alter ego have evolved over the years. Chris Evans, who plays the part in the current Marvel movies, is among the interviewees here. So are Hayley Atwell (whose "Marvel's Agent Carter" has its season premiere right after this) and relatives of Captain America creators Joe Simon and Jack Kirby. **New**

continued on next page

WEDNESDAY
10 p.m. on CBS
Code Black

Angus (Harry Ford) has mixed feelings when his brother (guest star Tommy Dewey), a celebrated doctor, seeks a job at Angels Memorial in the new episode "First Date." Christa (Bonnie Somerville) becomes increasingly drawn to Neal (Raza Jaffrey). A patient (guest star Jesse Bradford) takes too much of an interest in Malaya (Melanie Chandra) for her comfort. Jillian Murray also continues her guest role. Marcia Gay Harden and Luis Guzman also star. **New**

THURSDAY
9 p.m. on CW
The 100

The third season of this drama series begins with "Wanheda: Part One" and the main characters' battles, following their arrival on Earth, supposedly over — but anyone who's watched the show likely knows that won't last long. Remnants of their earlier fights resurface, and they also face new challenges ... with nothing less than the survival of the human race at stake. Eliza Taylor, Devon Bostick and Paige Turco continue as cast regulars. **Season Premiere New**

9:30 p.m. on CBS
Angel From Hell

"Go With Your Gut" is the title lesson Amy (Jane Lynch) imparts to Allison (Maggie Lawson) in this new episode, as they go to a nightclub for an education in not overanalyzing things and just flowing with the moment. Marv (Kevin Pollak) starts to wonder about Amy and runs a background check on her. Kyle Bornheimer also stars. **New**

FRIDAY
9 p.m. on HISTORY
Movie: Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead: The Story of the National Lampoon

Douglas Tirola's 2015 documentary (which also airs tonight on Showtime) is a love letter to the iconoclastic and often outrageous National Lampoon magazine, including extensive and previously unseen archival material and illustrations from its pages. The film also includes new interviews with Chevy Chase, "Animal House" director John Landis, Kevin Bacon, Tim Matheson, Beverly D'Angelo, writer P.J. O'Rourke, Billy Bob Thornton, John Goodman and a host of others. **Premiere**

SATURDAY
8 p.m. on LIFETIME
Movie: Toni Braxton: Unbreak My Heart

Adapted from her memoir, this new TV movie chronicles the tumultuous life and career of R&B singer-songwriter Toni Braxton, candidly addressing her battle with lupus, the challenges posed by her son's autism and those familiar heartaches of superstars: divorce and financial disaster. Lex Scott Davis ("The Exes") portrays Braxton, while Debbi Morgan plays her strong-willed mother, Evelyn. Gavin Houston co-stars in the movie, which is executive produced by Braxton and Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds. **Premiere**



Lex Scott Davis stars in "Toni Braxton: Unbreak My Heart"



Maggie Lawson stars in "Angel From Hell"



Chevy Chase (left) and Douglas Tirola are featured in "Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead: The Story of the National Lampoon"