

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**RAMÓN RODRÍGUEZ TALKS PLAYING REIMAGINED LATINO SPECIAL AGENT IN ABC'S *WILL TRENT* IN SEPT. 9 ISSUE OF *EMMY* MAGAZINE**

(LOS ANGELES – Sept. 6, 2023) — Renewed for a second season in April after premiering at the top of the year, the ABC drama *Will Trent* earned well-deserved praise for Ramón Rodríguez's performance as the title character, a brilliant but tortured special agent for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. Rodríguez talks with *emmy* about playing the role, which reimagines aspects of the character from the bestselling crime novels by author Karin Slaughter and the responsibility that comes with being a role model. The award-winning official publication of the Television Academy is on newsstands Sept. 9.

After nearly 20 years on screen, Rodríguez is no stranger to working on a series; but initially, he wasn't convinced that *Will Trent* was the right project for him. "You need to make sure you align with the creators and writers," Rodríguez says. "My goal was to make something unique and different because there's a lot of cop shows out there. I needed it to be meaningful."

In "**Role Remodel**," Rodríguez shares with *emmy* how he found meaning in playing the Atlanta-based special agent, a character orphaned as an infant who struggles with childhood traumas while thriving in his profession thanks to exceptional gifts that allow him to see crime scenes better than top experts. In Slaughter's books,



Will is white; on the show, however, the character, like Rodríguez, is Puerto Rican. "That was one of the reasons I wasn't sure I was right for it," he says.

"We all have the stereotypes and clichés [about Latinos] that are put out there," Rodríguez continues. "But what was interesting was, if [Will] doesn't know who he is, there wouldn't be any signs of him being Latino. It became interesting in the sense of being able to remove ethnicity." That disconnect allowed Rodríguez to dive into a character who knew nothing of his background. "It's not about that, but just 'How can I become this character as honestly as possible?' We don't have to play the tropes of what it is to be Puerto Rican. We don't have to see ourselves in the way we've always been shown."

Also a producer, Rodríguez takes great pride in collaborating with the entire creative team, including showrunners Liz Heldens and Daniel Thomsen. Co-star Erika Christensen, who plays Will's colleague and on-and-off love interest Angie Polaski, saw Rodríguez's dedication and hard work firsthand. "With the number of hours in the day, he's spread a lot thinner. He's clearly grateful for the opportunity and for the extra responsibility he's taken on," Christensen says. "And as far as representation, I can only imagine how Ramón would have felt when he was a kid watching TV, to see somebody populate the screen [who looked] like him."

Rodríguez takes the responsibility of being a role model seriously. "I'm very mindful of how great it is to see a Latino playing a role that maybe wasn't meant to be Latino. And it's a positive figure," Rodríguez says. "For me, representation isn't only in front of the camera—it's critical behind the camera. I'm hoping to push the needle."

While Will Trent may not know who he is or where he's from, Rodríguez certainly does. "I'm very fortunate to stand on the shoulders of a whole lot of people who came before me and laid down amazing groundwork to get us to where we are now, but there's a lot more work that needs to be done," Rodríguez says. "I want to open doors."

Additional feature highlights from the new issue include:

- In "**Treasure Hunters**," *emmy* explores Netflix series *One Piece*, the first-ever live-action adaptation of the record-breaking Japanese comic book of the same name. Eiichiro Oda, creator of the title dominating the manga and anime markets, serves as executive producer.
- For the 40th anniversary of the highest-rated television movie in American broadcast history, *The Day After*, director Nicholas Meyer and others reflect on its legacy in "**Forty Years After**." A harrowing look at the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust in America's heartland, the film was not an easy sell for network television in 1983. Still, the result was a massive hit for ABC, landing 12 Emmy nominations and altering the course of history by influencing President Ronald Reagan's decision to pursue and sign the

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

- In “**Lady Luck**,” veteran actress Joan Collins talks with *emmy* about her famed career, including playing the iconic villain Alexis Carrington Colby in the 1980’s hit series *Dynasty*.

Please note: Interviews with writers and performers were completed before the strikes of their respective guilds.

About *emmy*

Emmy, the official publication of the Television Academy, goes behind the scenes of the industry for a unique insider’s view. With wide-ranging, inclusive subjects representative of the Television Academy membership and the medium as a whole, *emmy* showcases the scope of television and profiles the people who make it happen, from the stars of top shows and artisans behind the cameras, to programming trends and technological advances. Honored with dozens of awards for editorial excellence, *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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