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‘9-1-1’ Showrunner Teases Fate Of Key Characters; Cast Talks Honoring First Responders – PaleyFest

By Dino-Ray Ramos

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Ahead of the premiere of part 2 of its second season on March 18, [Angela Bassett](#), [Peter Krause](#), [Jennifer Love Hewitt](#), [Oliver Stark](#), [Aisha Hinds](#), [Kenneth Choi](#), [Rockmond Dunbar](#), and Ryan Guzman of Fox’s *9-1-1* took the stage at [PaleyFest](#) Sunday evening in Los Angeles along with showrunner Tim Minear to talk about the over-the-top show and what’s in store for some of the characters — particularly Choi’s character Chimney and newcomer Hewitt who joined the second season as *9-1-1* operator Maddie.

After screening an episode which Minear called a “sampler platter” of the series, the group came out and shortly after, moderator Tim Stack of *Entertainment Weekly* pointed out that Choi was there so it’s a good sign that Chimney is still alive after his life was hanging in the balance at the end of the episode. Stack point blank asked him if he survives.

Choi danced around the question a bit before laughing and saying “I can’t say anything – you should probably ask Tim that question.”

Minear took the question and teased Chimney’s fate saying that the series will have a “Chimney begins” episode in the near future. “We will be resolving his fate in the next three episodes,” he shared.

Maddie has developed some sort of relationship with Chimney, but before that, she has to deal with her dark past. In the last episode, her

abusive ex-husband has tracked her down and they have a confrontation where she takes an intense punch from him. What makes it even more intense is that the man playing Hewitt's ex-husband is her real-life husband Brian Hallisay.

"It was very awkward," laughs Hewitt. She joked that maybe he was hiding some pent up frustration from their relationship. During the Q&A with the audience, she said, "It's been comforting for him to play that part because we do crazy things." She laughed, "I've been really proud of him because I had no idea he is so creepy. It's been really nice to have him there."

As for Maddie's fate as a victim of abuse, Minear said that she will not be taking this lying down. "This is a story teed up since Jennifer joined the show," he said. "We take the story very seriously. There's a very satisfying kick-ass resolution to this story."

A bright spot in these two stories of questionable fate is that Maddie and Chimney are together — a storyline that Minear said that Hewitt pitched her during TCA. "Look at him, he's the cutest!" Hewitt gushed. She points out they are two good people who have been through a lot and she wanted them to end up together.

Besides Maddie and Chimney, another romance that came to the forefront was that of Bassett's Athena and Krause's Bobby. Minear said it had been evolving since the end of the first season. "They were meant to be together," he said. "It was predictable yet you didn't see it coming." Since the first season, Bassett and Krause admitted that they didn't know they would be romantically involved. Minear said it made sense because they understand each other's world and the show has been building up to it.

Hinds, who plays firefighter and paramedic Hen, found out that Minear must have been mining stories during that same TCA where Hewitt pitched that she and Chimney should get together because it was there

that she shared the story of when she was shot as a teenager in real life. It was the first time she had experience with 9-1-1.

“Growing up where I’m from you never call 9-1-1,” she admitted.

“Someone called 9-1-1 on my behalf.” Hinds told how she was caught in a crossfire at 16 years old and is grateful that she is alive and telling the story today. It also made her appreciate the roles of first responders.

“When you talk about preparing for these roles, I tend to create my roles from the inside out,” said Hinds. “I wanted to talk to these female firefighters who don’t get to have a voice or be represented.”

Since playing Hen, Hinds said many people have thanked her for “being a reflection of their presence.”

“I’m grateful for the opportunities the writers have given to me to give her so many layers that honors first responders out there.”

Minear said that the response from first responders has been positive — but mostly after the first season. Stark said that during the first season, many real-life firefighters were mad that his character Buck stole a firetruck to have sex in. He laughed and said that one firefighter told him that those who got mad at him were just jealous because that was something they wish they could do.

Like with every show they have done as of late, Minear, along with co-creators Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk, have created an inclusive landscape with *9-1-1*. With women of color at the forefront, a story about a gay black man played by Dunbar (Minear hopes to build on his story), Eddie’s son with cerebral palsy played by Gavin McHugh and layered diversity that doesn’t feel like tokenism, the Fox show continues to help the TV landscape reflect the real world.

“We all hope to be seen and heard in some respect,” Bassett said about the representation on the show. “We all hope to be brought from the margins into the center.”

