

Interview at Deadline – April 17, 2025

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Angela Bassett & Tim Minear Dissect ‘9-1-1’ Shocker, Explain Why Bobby Had To Die, Reveal Alternate Scene & Easter Egg

By Nellie Andreeva

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Four Station 118 firefighters got trapped into a lab with a deadly virus on ABC’s *9-1-1*. Three of them, Chimney, Hen and Ravi, had a brush with death but it was the fourth who [didn’t come out alive](#): Captain Bobby Nash, played by series co-lead and executive producer [Peter Krause](#).

Thursday night’s episode, “Lab Rats,” written by series executive producer Kristen Reidel, Molly Green and James Leffler and directed by Dawn Wilkinson, marked [Krause’s final appearance](#) as Bobby sacrificed himself to save his team.

In an interview with Deadline, *9-1-1* executive producer/showrunner [Tim Minear](#) explained the decision to kill off the beloved character, which is certain to leave the series’ legions of fans heartbroken, and what it would mean for the long-running drama, which has been [renewed for a ninth season](#). He addressed the online leaks from the shoot of Bobby’s funeral, along with the release of “The Last Alarm” title for that episode that tipped fans off to his fate, and that alternate (and fake) Bobby death script page that further fueled speculation that he may be gone. He also pointed out the clue to Bobby’s looming demise early in the season, which you likely missed, gave an update on Bobby’s mom and teased upcoming *9-1-1* cast addition(s).

9-1-1 co-lead/executive producer [Angela Bassett](#), who plays Bobby’s wife, LAPD Sargent Athena Grant, spoke of her shock and her meeting with Krause after learning of Bobby’s fate. She revealed that — possibly as a redirect — there was another firefighter in the lab who they initially thought was going to die.

Bassett detailed the filming of Bobby and Athena's emotional goodbye scene on opposite sides of a glass door and shared that they shot a different version of its ending after Bobby tells Athena, "You have to go, you can't be here for this next part" in which she complies with his request.

In the final cut, Athena replies with, "I'm here for all the parts that we have left" and stays with Bobby as he kneels to pray and dies, a final chord Krause had a key involvement in beyond acting, Minear revealed.

Why is Peter Krause leaving 9-1-1?

DEADLINE: *For a long-running drama like 9-1-1 to kill off a major star the reasons are often financial, sometime creative and occasionally both. Which one do we have here?*

TIM MINEAR: Creative.

DEADLINE: *100% creative?*

MINEAR: 100%

DEADLINE: *When and why did you make that decision to kill off Bobby?*

MINEAR: Like you said, going into Season 9, I have all these perilous situations that I put the characters into, and I think maybe the writers but also the audience starts to get a little complacent because it's like, well, we all know it's going to all work out fine in the end.

I had been toying with the idea for a couple of seasons actually, maybe even longer, feeling like at some point I'm going to have to do this. And then once I came up with this idea for the lab leak episode, that's when it solidified for me that it was time to do it, it felt like a real opportunity to give somebody an epic Wrath of Khan-like death. When it came down to deciding who should that be, I wanted it to be a character that affected all the characters' stories in a very specific and yet different ways. There was only one man for the job, and it was Bobby.

So that's why. It was a wrenching decision, and I think it was wrenching for everybody, because I adore Peter, and he's so great on the show, really the backbone of the show in so many ways, which is why it was both a terrifying decision but also, creatively, I just knew that it would be so meaningful and have such repercussions and give me so much story for the show.

Once I had made that choice, suddenly the world of the show seems so much more real to me, just feeling the grief of the characters and feeling just how that nuclear bomb going off in the center of that universe affected everything. Suddenly everything just felt weirdly more alive to me.

Krause and Bassett's reaction to Bobby's fate

DEADLINE: *There is this line in Bobby's final speech where he says, "I don't want to go." I felt like Peter was not acting; the guy said just last last year that he wanted to do 100 more episodes of 9-1-1. What was his reaction to the news that his character is being killed off?*

MINEAR: Peter is a friend of mine. He understands the realities of the creative process, and he knew it wasn't personal, he understood right away why I was telling him this. But I don't think it was an easy decision for any of us, it really felt like a loved one was dying in a way I never expected.

When I was on *Angel* many, many years ago, I was known as the Tim Reaper because I would constantly kill off beloved characters. On a show about vampires, it's a little different, they can always come back. But here, because we'd all been in this together for over eight years, it's like, "Oh, it's TV, you kill off characters," but when it came right down to it, I think we were all surprised at how incredibly emotional it was for all of us, crew, his castmates, me, him. And it remains that way right now, very raw.

DEADLINE: *Angela, did you have any inkling that something of this magnitude might be coming this season?*

BASSETT: Absolutely not. Not an inkling, not a word, not birdies, nothing. This is near the end of the season. Sometimes near the end of the season, we're in this race against time to get our scripts, you're really getting it in real time. It's like get it today, and we're going to start filming it tomorrow.

So it was really a jaw-dropping moment when I read the script and saw that. Well, initially it was a different character, the whole bio lab. I mean, it could be anyone, it could be Chimney, it could be him, it could be Ravi.

I remember Tim called. He said, someone's going to pass away. I said, Is it *me*? Self-preservation, you know. I went through the list, you start with yourself, but I was very surprised that it was my husband.

DEADLINE: *You mentioned that there was a different character that initially was supposed to die. Did something change in the script?*

BASSETT: That may have been just a misdirect, but initially it was Ravi, the probie; well, he is not a probie anymore.

Impact on Athena & the 118 and potential '9-1-1' cast addition

DEADLINE: *Angela, if I understood correctly, you literally found out about the death when you got the "Lab Rats" episode script, not earlier in the season?*

BASSETT: Literally. Trust and believe, yeah.

DEADLINE: *So when you were interviewed in March and said that you cannot imagine the show without Peter, you weren't being coy and protecting the secret, you were just being honest?*

BASSETT: I try to always be honest and never lie. Only after we'd received the episode we had to be a little bit coy. No, I can't imagine, that's true. And even sitting here today, I can't imagine it. I don't know how this is going to play out: Athena, her relationship with her job, herself, her kids, the 118. This is the second husband that she's lost and the end of her and Peter's tremendous bond. Where is she going?

DEADLINE: *As an actor, you see where this is probably going. Athena was in a great place, building a new home with her husband. And now she's lost a third significant other: a fiancé and a husband to death, and another husband to divorce.*

BASSETT: You're so right about that, I forgot about Emmett.

DEADLINE: *It feels like the writers want Athena back in a rocky, dark, emotional state.*

BASSETT: I think you're right, I think you might be on to something.

DEADLINE: *This is a huge shock to the system of the entire team. We saw Chimney who clearly has survivor guilt; I can't even imagine what Athena will go through. Tim, can you talk about the impact of Bobby's death?*

MINEAR: Well, not only is Bobby the captain of the 118, he is a father figure and mentor to Buck. He is an inspiration to all of them. He is seen as a husband. He is Athena's children's stepfather. It just reaches every element of the show. And as far as where we're going to go with all that, the story will tell me.

DEADLINE: *Will you be adding somebody to the cast in the wake of Peter's exit? Somebody needs to lead the 118.*

MINEAR: There will be changes in the universe. I'm still working my way through what those changes will be. I'm definitely going to be adding to the fire family but not necessarily in the way you might think.

Bobby's foreshadowed death and hero sendoff

DEADLINE: *Did you adjust Bobby's story arc this season to give him a proper sendoff? Obviously he died a hero, saving his team, but he also had a heroic moment in the pre-lab leak episode, emerging from the smoke of a bus crash with a baby in his arms. He finally reconciled with his mother, too.*

MINEAR: Yes, a little bit actually. I'd really been thinking about it back during the first part of the season. There's a moment in the first part of the season when Brad Torrence, the *Hotshots* [TV show] star, says that his captain is never going to wake up from his coma, and a fan says, you can't kill him off, he's the father figure of the firehouse. So that was me hinting a little bit about where I might be going.

DEADLINE: *Was Peter involved in crafting Bobby's ending?*

MINEAR: When I told him what was happening, like I said, he understood. And then I laid out for him how I felt this sacrifice would present itself. In a way, it's not arbitrary at all that this is Bobby, because it makes sense in the tragic arc of his character, for this to be his ending, that he ended up sacrificing himself to save the people that were closest to him. And if you want to talk about redemption, it's the ultimate redemption. We talked about every element of how we would accomplish it.

DEADLINE: *Did Bobby die before his mother? Will we find out if she's still alive?*

MINEAR: Yes, you'll see her at the funeral.

DEADLINE: *I assume that will be the May 1 episode "The Last Alarm"?*

MINEAR: Yes.

Following the airing of the "Lab Rat" episode, ABC released a promo for "The Last Alarm," which deals with the immediate aftermath of Bobby's death and features his funeral.

The funeral scene leaks & that Bobby in a coffin script page

DEADLINE: *Speaking of the funeral. Didn't you guys learn anything from And Just Like That... and Succession about using decoys to throw bystanders off and protect a major death? As videos from the location shoot hit social media, online sleuths quickly deducted that Bobby is probably dead.*

MINEAR: We had our fingers crossed that when we went out and shot the procession, it wouldn't leak. I think we were just all being incredibly naive; I think I've underestimated the interest of the fans out there for this show. I think I've always been a little bit surprised by it. You know me, I'd worked in genre for so long, and that fan base is quite rabid and quite interested. Half the time I think, well, this is my network procedural, people aren't going to be as stanning about this show as they were about the other shows, but boy, I think the stanning on this show is bigger than anything I did in genre.

I wanted the pageantry, I wanted the production value, I needed that. And so we rolled the dice, and we shot it in public. Now, the fact that I was literally watching the

tap from the camera and Twitter, and I was like, hmm, which one's the tap and which one's somebody livestream TikTok-ing it, that was a bit of a shock.

DEADLINE: *What about that fake script page with Bobby calling 911 from a coffin, which Oliver Stark posted on April Fools' Day that also riled fans up? How did that come about?*

MINEAR: As far as that page, I don't know where that came from.

Bobby & Athena's final scene and the alternate version you didn't see

DEADLINE: *Angela, what was your conversation like with Peter after finding out that Bobby was going to die. Did you call him right away?*

BASSETT: No. I knew it was gonna be tough and sad and awkward, so I just preferred to see him face to face as opposed to on the phone. Part of us knows, we've been in this industry for a while, these kind of things have happened to our characters from time to time. I saw him, we looked at each other, it's like, oh well, and gave each other a big hug. We're just like, didn't see this coming.

At that moment, we knew it's something that you have to process over the days and weeks, especially as you're still filming episodes and episodes. It's something that's coming but it's slowly revealing itself. It's a goodbye, but it's taking time. I guess it gave us all a chance to process and mourn. And we did, because we're an incredibly close cast, that team is very close. In scenes where Peter and I found ourselves with each other, it was like, "Oh my god, I can't believe it." "I know, what are we gonna do?" "How do you feel?" Knowing the end and still having the ending scene to do.

DEADLINE: *Let's talk about that ending scene for Bobby and Athena at the lab. Was this the last scene you two filmed?*

BASSETT: No, fortunately, it wasn't the last scene. Since we do everything out of order, I still had a few more scenes to do with him. It was a heart-wrenching moment, and then that's the goodbye. Cutting it off bit by bit, not a big chop as it were.

DEADLINE: *How did you feel doing the goodbye scene, not even being able to be in the same space with your acting partner?*

BASSETT: I actually enjoyed it. It added even more emotionality for me because I couldn't get to him, I couldn't touch him, embrace him, grab him. It's like there's this barrier so you're really trying to break through the glass. It really set something up for me that I didn't expect, because we had a number of scenes where, okay, I think this is where the emotion is going to be.

We did two different versions [of the final scene]. There was also a version where, when he tells me to leave as he doesn't want me to see what he needs to do and what he's going to do in the lab, I go out and I'm by myself, and there's Buck, and then I have a breakdown there, like I was so strong for him inside.

I was like, uh-uh. I said, well, I've done it now. I can't cry every single scene. I mean, you still have a funeral to go through.

But when it came to that scene where I was actually in it with Bobby, you're separated by the glass, by the partition, by everything that separates people, your metaphor for whatever separates people, the virus, all of it. And seeing them, seeing their eyes, the memory of who they are, who they are to you, it was just there, every moment, every take for the two of us — the history, the bond.

DEADLINE: *Knowing what happens with Peter brings additional meaning to some of the dialogue in that scene, Bobby saying "I don't want to go" and "I'm sorry, we don't have any more time" and Athena responding, "We need more time." Was any of that improvised? It seems a bit like you're talking about you as actors not being on the show together anymore.*

BASSETT: No, that's all Tim, those were the words. But yeah, it has that whole double entendre, double meaning that's come into play, absolutely, yeah.

DEADLINE: *What about the touching of the hands through the glass, was all in the script too?*

BASSETT: I believe that was in the script as well, a little of that, they wanted that moment.

DEADLINE: *Tim, you mentioned redemption earlier. Bobby was praying as he died, also coming full circle as he and Athena first bonded when they went to church together. How did you come up with that ending?*

MINEAR: That was Peter. That was Peter.

DEADLINE: *Angela, how was it filming that? Was that the hardest part of that whole sequence?*

BASSETT: Again, we filmed two versions of this, and I think that was the hardest part. But I always thought this version was the most right and heroic of Bobby, because that is such an integral part of his journey. And leaning in that moment still on his faith. That it is a tough, impossible situation, but there's still his creator, there's still hope. Never surrender that. And I thought it was beautiful and touching. He couldn't touch me, but he can still touch. He can still be in communion with his creator. So I love that.

So I appreciate what the version of it that I longed for was [chosen]. Even with the separation of the glass, there's a tremendous bond and respect. And they're vulnerable with each other. They've had to be so strong for their team but they have that moment of vulnerability and still, you can go on your knees and pray.

DEADLINE: *Who picked Hozier's "Work Song" for Bobby's final moments?*

MINEAR: That was Kristen Reidel.

Bracing for fans' wrath

DEADLINE: *Tim, are you afraid of fans' reaction to Bobby's death? Are you going into witness protection?*

MINEAR: I've been in witness protection ever since I stopped looking at social media. That's the way I protect myself, is I just don't look at that stuff.

I'm definitely going out on a skinny branch in some way. We'll see what happens. I fervently believe that it was the right move creatively for the show. I didn't expect us to be going into a ninth year, and if the show has any hope of being creatively viable and alive going forward, then you need moments like this. You need them.