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PERSON: Welcome to the Talks at Google podcast, where great minds meet. I'm Anna, bringing you this week's episode. Talks at Google brings the world's most influential thinkers, creators, makers, and doers all to one place. Every episode of this podcast is taken from a video that can be seen at youtube.com/talksatgoogle. Discussing their new show "Proven Innocent," which premiered Friday, February 15, 2019, on Fox, this episode features Kelsey Grammar, Rochelle Lefevre, Russell Hornsby, and executive producer Danny Strong. "Proven Innocent" tells the emotional story of one woman's fight to prove the innocence of wrongfully convicted people. More info via fox.com/proven-innocent. In conversation with Googler Malika Saada Saar, here's the cast from Fox's "Proven Innocent."

[00:01:00]

DANNY STRONG: I'm Danny Strong, the executive producer of "Proven Innocent."

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: I'm Rachelle Lefevre, and I play Madeline Scott.

KELSEY GRAMMER: Kelsey Grammer. I play Saul--Saul Bellows. I play that guy.

RUSSELL HORNSBY: My name is Russell Hornsby, and I Play Ezekiel Boudreau.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: So, I just want to start out with a note of gratitude. I'm a human rights lawyer, and I spent over 15 years dealing with the issue of criminal justice reform, many years with women behind bars, girls behind bars. And I just want to thank you for taking the stories of so many individuals I met and creating this beautiful show out of it as a way of centering voices that aren't usually heard. So thank you for that. Kelsey, of course we're gonna start with you.

KELSEY GRAMMER: Lovely.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: So, I want to understand.

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Like, you know, this show is about wrongful conviction, prosecutorial overreach, if not misconduct, forced confessions, and really kind of surfaces some of the brokenness in our criminal justice system. What made you do this? What drew you to be part of this kind of narrative and storytelling?

KELSEY GRAMMER: Oh, well, first off, which is pretty simple, in my life, somebody offered me a job. And then--you know, that's half the battle. Then I went and saw the pilot, which had been shot already. I replaced and actor that was lovely in the performance. But it actually gave me an opportunity to say, "Well, you know what, there's a few things I can offer you guys for this." I think he needed to be more rounded and actually try to give--put a human face on a guy that was, you know, to be painted as bit of a monster and the devil of the peace.

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But he's a man of some--what's the word?--inefficiency, some lacking, some insecurity that lives in him that I thought was kind of fun to play. And he's got some power, but it's very limited. And he's got some courage, but it's very limited too. So, I liked the fact that he was a bit emasculated in his life, and that this thing--his devotion to justice--I think is real and genuine. It's just also, part of his 20 years in the business has been, "Well, this one gets moved through. Yeah, that one's guilty." You know, you make

some snap judgments within the context of this stuff. And unfortunately, it's a concept or an ideal that is administered by human beings, and they're always gonna mess it up. Whether or not it's--what's the word?--deliberate or malevolent, who knows.

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I think there may be some moments--every lawyer, I believe, has rehearsed with a witness. I don't know if there's a crime in that. But I do think there's a great amount of attention that must be paid to this idea. And if you get it wrong, you get it wrong, and obviously people have gotten it wrong. And maybe, maybe there's an aspect of them not caring or trying to CYA--cover your ass--about it. but I found him an interesting character. And what's nice is, as I collaborated with Danny and said, "You know what, I don't know. I don't buy this," or, you know, "Maybe he would"--you know, obviously the Chicago Police Department does have it's sort of indictable kind of character flaws. And some of them even were announced during the time we were shooting the film. Remember, they found those three kids, I guess, that had set up like 20 different guys.

DANNY STRONG: Yeah.

KELSEY GRAMMER: They finally let them out. That was-that was a cool moment. But there are also good people within the context of this kind of work.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: So, how do you play him?

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So you play him as not the villain? Do you play him as someone who has a good spirit but has been broken? Like, when you come into that role, what is that you want to show the audience about this individual?

KELSEY GRAMMER: Well, I wanted to make sure that people understood that he actually cared about his job, that he wanted to do a good job at it, and thought he had, and was honestly quite convinced that Rosemarie--I mean Madeline is guilty. And so--and for whatever reason that was. You know, some--left some of it up in the air. There was a piece of evidence they never found, that, you know, left it--possibly he might still think, "Well, that will prove it." And we explore some of this stuff in the storyline as it goes along.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: So Danny, I--you shared with this me, and I would love you to share it with the audience--the genesis of this series. Like, what--how it was brought to you, and what made you decide to act on it? Because it's not the typical law and order kind of series that we've been exposed to.

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DANNY STRONG: Mm-hmm. Well, it started with an idea from the creator of the show, David Elliot. As a screenwriter I've known for many years, and he came to me and said, "What about doing a show on the Innocence Project?" And I--

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Can you just tell people what the Innocent [inaudible]?

DANNY STRONG: The Innocent Project is-it's sort of--it's a group of law firms, although they're not necessarily affiliated with each other, that are dedicated to people that have been wrongfully convicted.

That's their mission statement. That's what they do. And a really wonderful organization. And I thought, you know, I like to do projects that have some sort of social justice component to it. I think it makes the project worthwhile doing, and I simultaneously think it makes the project better. It makes it more dramatic and more--a better piece of entertainment on top of it. But it's just so much more worthwhile when you feel like you're working on something that has something to say, as opposed to just pure entertainment.

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And so, you know, a show--a weekly law show on wrongful conviction, for me, was a bullseye of the kind of show I'd like to be affiliated with. And coincidentally, the week before, I had seen the Netflix Amanda Knox documentary. And it had enraged me. I didn't know that much about her case. I just-I just always thought, "I think she's probably innocent," without knowing the details of the case, just what little I had read. And she was so railroaded. And watching the Italian police detective discuss her case, I had to pause--pause it, because I started screaming at the television. I could not believe his logic. And then as the document goes on and on, it just becomes more absurd. And so I was, at that moment, when he had pitched me, I had just seen this--and was wound up about wrongful conviction. So the timing was absolutely perfect. And I said, well let's make the lead character someone who was wrongfully convicted and got out and became a wrongful conviction attorney.

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So it was--you know, there definitely was a timing element of this.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: And it has become more a part of the conversation, right? Like, you do have podcasts around those who have been wrongfully convicted. And you do-you do have a lot more attention to the Innocence Project and those who have been released because of DNA.

DANNY STRONG: I just want to say, on top of that I don't understand why it's just now, in the last 18 months, becoming a conversation. As some--you know, wrongful conviction--I mean, our justice system isn't riddled with error. There are people in prison that are guilty. For sure. Right? It's a justice system. But there are people that aren't. And it is a grave injustice. And so the fact that it's now just becoming a topic of discussion, I don't understand why this hasn't always been a topic discussion, you know. But I'm really proud to be a part of it, now that it actually, you know, is at the forefront.

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Well, I think part of what plays out is that we've had law and order stories on television that haven't given voice to what you all are giving voice to. And so that kind of movement in the public square discourse around justice reform I think has been very powerful. So, I want to talk to the actors around how they are doing this, because I have to say, as someone who identified as, like, a movement lawyer, I was really excited when I saw Thurgood Marshall's picture in your office, and the whole idea of what it means to be a lawyer who's righteous and part of a kind of crusading way of using law as a tool for justice and goodness. So I would love to know how you both prepared for those roles of being these kinds of righteous lawyers.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: I'm not sure. Maybe that question is specifically for you.

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I'm not sure Madeline is a righteous lawyer. I think she's-I think she's doing a righteous thing, but she's complicated, and her motivation--you know, she wasn't a person who knew, when she was yeah--saw injustice in the world and thought, "I'm gonna do something about this. I'm gonna dedicate my life to--I'm gonna go to law school and dedicate my life to writing these wrongs." She had a profoundly traumatic life-changing experience, and I think that she's fortunate that that experience, rather than, as you see with her brother--rather than destroy her and continue to break her down and continue to re-traumatize her, that experience awakens something in her, and that she wants justice because of what happened to her. I'm not sure that the word "righteous" is right for her as a whole.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Mm-hmm. It's about her lived experience, and doing the lawyering from that place of lived experience.

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RACHELLE LEFEVRE: Absolutely. Because she's--you know, she definitely cares about her clients and is trying to save the people who are wrongfully convicted. But from my experience, living with her--and I think we all have a version of this in our lives, where you try to right a wrong for other people, and you tell yourself that it's pure, and you tell yourself that what you really want to do is just spare other people the hell that you went through, but in my-in my experience, you're always in some way trying to go back in time and save yourself.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Mm-hmm.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: And I think that that plays a part. I think that's why, in each episode, she connects so deeply with each of the characters. There are lawyers that I've talked to who have suggested that she, interest he real world, would have to actually rein that in in order to be a really good, effective lawyer, that you can't be crying with your clients all the time.

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And that's okay that that's what our show is, because we have another lawyer in our firm who is righteous and who does hold up that end of it. And I'll let him speak now.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Russell?

RUSSELL HORNSBY: Well, there's the-there's the why and then there's the how. Right? So, you know, the why is because, when I read the script, the story touched me, the characters touched me, the premise really touched me. And then when I had an opportunity to sit down with Danny and David Elliot, show creator, and just have a conversation about what we're trying to do, and what we ultimately want to say--and I was, you know, just--they listened to my thoughts and ideas about who the character is and where this character is going to go. And so then we get into, you know, the how. And you ask about preparation. You know, quite honestly, I look at is life prepared me.

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You know, I feel like, right now, I'm in a place, in a spaces, where roles are meeting me where I am. And so the preparation comes from, for me, being black in America. It comes from, for me, knowing that a Thurgood Marshall exists, knowing that there was as Frederick Douglass, you know, knowing that there--you know, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, righteous leaders--there was the Black Panther Party--

who were out there fighting for people, for their dignity, for their place and their space in the society. And so, as a man, as a conscious member of society, you ingest that, you absorb that, and that becomes part of your narrative, that becomes part of your story. And what I have to deal with day-to-day as a black man in America, what friends have to deal with, what you read in the newspaper, what you see on television, all of that--you don't have to prepare for that, because that's a part of you. So the reason why this narrative touched me so is because I can then in turn bring that passion, bring that pain, bring that anguish to bear, and bring it--and really now--

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And as best we can, as best I can, touch people with my passion and with this pain that I possess, and through Ezekiel Boudreau, touch people, pierce their heart, pierce their soul, so that hey can say, "Wow, I-I--something--I feel something different. I sense something different. Now, I want to converse, I want to community with other people about what I just witnessed? What just touched me? How? Why did that touch me?" That's what moved me, and that's why, you know, I'm here. And that's the preparation that goes into this type of work, you know what I mean? You can't--the saying goes, you can't lie in life and tell the truth on stage. You know, it is a part of who you are, right?--that you're bringing to bear.

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And so, you know, there's very rare times, but it is--you know, these roles, they meld with the person, and you can bring--I can bring Russell's humanity to EZ. And so therefore it ain't hard.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: I have to say that it was-it was a lovely touch to see that you had saved her.

RUSSELL HORNSBY: Yes.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Right? Because often when we see these kinds of shows, black men are the predator, the abuser. Right?

RUSSELL HORNSBY: Absolutely.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: And in this story, there is a way in which not only are you the righteous lawyer, but you saved her.

RUSSELL HORNSBY: Absolutely.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: And I think that that was a really beautiful touch. And I want to talk about that more.

RUSSELL HORNSBY: And in that--sorry--image is everything.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Yes.

RUSSELL HORNSBY: You know what I mean? So.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Indeed.

RUSSELL HORNSBY: I appreciate that.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: And I want to talk about that. You know, Shonda Rhimes talks about how this isn't about diversity, this is just about when we have inclusion in our shows, it's just showing realty.

RUSSELL HORNSBY: Indeed.

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MALIKA SAADA SAAR: And I really appreciate the kind of diversity that exists on the show and that is part of the cast. And I would love to hear you all talk about that experience of being intentional around who you are as character and together as cast in these very different backgrounds that you each bring to your performances.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: I would like to invite Danny to talk about the process that was so inclusive when you building the writer's room.

DANNY STRONG: Oh, you know, I mean, you know, our writer's room is 50 percent African-American. And it was--it just--that's what I wanted the writer's room.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: And 50 percent women.

DANNY STRONG: And 50 percent women. And it--you know, I just--that's what I wanted the room to be. I thought that would--is what it needed to be. I mean, especially on a show about wrongful conviction in which people of color are so adversely affected by wrongful conviction, and so many-so many people that have been wrongfully convicted and been released are people of color? Right?

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So how do you do a show like this and not have your writer's room--your writers--you know, a ton of people of color in the room? And then also, with the casting for the leads of the show--you know, for our law firm, we have two white lawyers, two African-American lawyers. I though, okay, well that's a cool makeup for a wrongful conviction law firm. And our directors--the same. You know, we've had many people of color directing, many women directing, many women of color directing. You know? So it's been--yeah, of course. it's been a-it's been a great mix, and--but I want to do that on everything I work on, not just because the show's about wrongful conviction.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: Yeah. And I think, you know, the reason I really wanted to have Danny say that is also because I think that the way that you talk about it represents where we-where we really should be, which is the idea that that's taken for granted, right? The idea that it doesn't have to be effortful, that it doesn't have to be something where you're trying to show how aware you are. it's just-it's just the right thing to do--to be inclusive.

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It's just the best-case scenario for everybody involved. And so I think that, in a way, as much as we--as much as these-these are conversations that are weighted, there is a certain amount where you can kind of breathe when you encounter people who are where we want to go, which is just to take these things for granted, as just the way to be. And so I always really appreciate, you know, the way that you talk about that, that it was just--that it was obvious.

KELSEY GRAMMER: Yeah, you know, it's funny. I'm thinking back through several of those shows that I've produced. On "Frasier," we had--it was probably 70 percent white, 30 percent black writers on the staff. There's an old saying, though, "You write what you know." You know, but on "Girlfriends," I think we had one white girl for a while. It was mostly black.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Can I just-can I just take a moment, though?

KELSEY GRAMMER: Yeah.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: 'Cause a lot of my friends talk about this when I shared with them that I was interviewing you.

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They were like, "He produced 'Girlfriends' and 'The Game.'" Kelsey Grammer did that. And I just want to, like, acknowledge that. Give a shout out...

KELSEY GRAMMER: Thank you.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: To the fact that you were supporting black content for more than just the moment, that this has been part of your presence in working in Hollywood.

KELSEY GRAMMER: It's been a long-a long time. Yeah. And the presumption has always been, well, just hire who's good. You know, I mean, I've never really-I've never really put a lot of labels on whether or not it should be this or that. It's just, it made sense, on "Girlfriends," to have a bunch of girls who were--well, half the girls were mixed, and that was kind of interesting too. And so--and we had, like, one writer that was mixed-race there. And that brought a certain perspective. But of course, when you're collaborating on the floor, especially in a sitcom, the actors and the writers--if they don't have a communication and a collaborative spirit instantly about what they know, what--you know, what they can say to a writer--"No, no, no, you guys have got this one wrong." That's-that's what you have to be able to do in that circumstance specifically.

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In an hour-long, you know, scripted drama, you know, there's a little bit more distance between the actor and the writing staff, as a rule. But, you know, "Girlfriends" started 20 years ago? Something like that.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

KELSEY GRAMMER: You know, I mean, that's--it seemed as natural as apple pie to just--to do that show. I don't know. I mean, we've always had a diversity--like, NBC always had a diversity kind of event, where they'd invite a few people of Asian descent and a couple of black people and a couple of white people, stand up on the stage and go, "Yeah, it's more important to us to have diversity." And so, "Well, oh shit, you know, put your money where your mouth it." So I went and pitched this show, and somebody finally said, "Yeah, we ought to put that on television." So. It seemed like a natural thing to do, and natural expression of--I grew up in the generation that--I mean, my parents--my grandparents raised me, mostly. And they were-they were colorblind people. They said, "You don't judge anybody based upon what they look like.

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"You judge them based upon what--you know, how--what they do, who they are. and you take your time. You don't judge anybody until you get to know them. Once you get to know them, then you have some information by which to say, 'No, this one's an asshole. This one--that one's okay.'" And, you

know, it's pretty elemental. Now, I think plan should be hired based upon whether or not they're good at their job. I do think it's great to have as much diversity and as much, sort of, openness about wherever you come from. As long as you show up that day, ready to work, bang, you're my guy or girl. You know, it doesn't matter to me. So, I'm--I mean, maybe that's a funny lenis. But I'm a practical guy. It's like, I want to go to work. I want to go home. Like, you know, we say [inaudible] going, "What the hell's taking so long? What the hell's going on now? You know, it's pretty simple stuff. I mean , we got a French guy that's a cameraman. You know, it's like, I don't know, maybe that's something we should be important--you know, find more important.

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RUSSELL HORNSBY: He's waiting for the [inaudible].

KELSEY GRAMMER: Sebastian [inaudible], "Wait a minute. I work the wrong hours. This is terrible." But I just--I love the process we live, and I love the fact that we care enough to say, "You know what, here's an issue we'd like to examine." The simplest answer to your question about why I took this role is, you know, somebody's got to play the bad guy. Honestly, somebody has to play that. But I believe he's a good human being who has made a lota serious mistakes and continues to make them, as you will see. But I also am a--I'm suddenly talking too much. I find myself suddenly in a compromising position, because the Fox advertising people asked me to do a fake, like, campaign speech for Rosemary's Law, or that sort of thing. I actually do a speech for that on a campaign issue called Marcy's Law, which is for victims' rights, which is a weird thing.

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My sister was murdered when she was 18. And there were three guys that killed her. But they also killed seven other people. And my dad was also murdered, which is a different story. But he--the guy that killed my dad actually got out, and nobody told us about it. And we found out, like, by accident. I actually found out--the National Enquirer wrote and article about it, and said, "Why is this guy out, and why is last name Niles? Did they do that deliberately? Did they call his brother Niles for a reason?" I mean, that was just so weird and awful. And so I thought it would be important to start talking about that kind of stuff. So in the face of what we're doing, in terms of a cause celebre, it also--it's odd that I'm involved in this other world, where I would--I'm pro-death penalty in spirit because of the guys that killed my sister. But I am against it because you would never want to kill an innocent man.

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And if you don't know for sure--you know. I mean, if it was up to me, I'd kill him. That'd be fine. Let me get-let me take care of these two. There's only two of them left. But there's a whole--there was four other families. the prosecutor decided that they would only try for three of the murders, because those were slam dunks, they thought. And they left four other families without closure, kind of. And I thought, boy, this is a-this is a sad thing for our justice system. She died in '75, so it was a while ago. But I'm flying-I'm flying out on March 15 to ask them to keep one of these guys in jail. You know, he gets--every year, he gets a chance to say, "I'm--you know, I did my time. I should get out." Well, he killed seven people.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: I want to thank you for sharing your sister's story and for having the courage to give voice to what it means to have a loved one murdered in that way and be able to talk about the work of the wrongfully convicted, to be able to hold both realities, both places [inaudible].

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KELSEY GRAMMER: You do want to hold them both.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Absolutely.

KELSEY GRAMMER: 'Cause we don't want to be a society that makes those kind of mistakes.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Absolutely.

KELSEY GRAMMER: We just don't want to be.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Absolutely. And we are a better system for being able to hold both those places. And the conversation around justice is a better one because we can hold both of those places. So thank you.

KELSEY GRAMMER: Sure.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: I come out of the work of girls who have been bought and sold and seeing horrible ways that they were raped and commercialized, and fighting for those abusers to be held accountable goes side by side with the insistence on fair and equitable justice.

KELSEY GRAMMER: Yeah. Absolutely.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: So I really appreciate your strength.

KELSEY GRAMMER: [inaudible] rush to judgment. You gotta-you gotta get them.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Yes. Yes. So thank you for bringing all of that present with us.

KELSEY GRAMMER: Of course. Thank you.

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MALIKA SAADA SAAR: I wanted to ask each of you to just talk about how this series, and everything that it brings forward, and all the ways that it has asked of you to-to stretch yourselves as writers, as actors, as producers. And all of what it has forced you to bear witness to, in terms of the stories of the wrongfully convicted, which are such horrible, egregious stories, in terms of their suffering, by evidence of a broken justice system. If you could talk about how all of that has changed you as a result of your work in the serious.

RUSSELL HORNSBY: It's a challenging question to answer, but all I can do is just harken back to kind of what I said before, that it's been ever-present in my life, you know, the notion of the wrongfully-the wrongfully convicted. You know, it's just--it's been a part of me and my life. And so I don't think it's--it hasn't really changed me, per se. It's just made living life [inaudible] a lot more painful. Because it's now--it's sort of just--now it's ever-present.

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You know. You're always--you're aware of it, but now it's ever-present. It's in the forefront of your spirit, you know. And, so, you know, you listen to podcasts, you read about things, and, you know--and now that I have children, you know, you do--you--I cry for them. Do you know what I mean? Like, it pains me when I think about these stories, when I listen to them, or I meet people who have been exonerated, it's just--it's painful, you know, quite honestly. And so that's what continues to give me the passion just to move forward and to work as hard as we do on the work, quite honestly. Because, you know, for what--when people see it, whatever they take from it, you want to make sure that it's full, and that it's fully something that they can ingest and then ultimately feel.

KELSEY GRAMMER: I'm just glad to lend a voice to anything that actually seems important at the time.

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I honestly am a witness, I suppose. And I think that's probably more important than anything else, is to witness something that is happening, to bring light to it, and be a part of that. And, you know, let--I mean, somebody told me a long ago--this is not an original thought--great art makes us asks questions. If you walk away with a question or two and say, "You know, maybe I better check that our or re-think this a little bit," that's-that's about as good as an actor's life can get--that you've actually done something that maybe someone decided one day to take a pause and re-think something. So, that's--I feel quite happy to be part of the game.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: I would echo that. And I would say that the experience that I had making it was that, and that I feel that the way that I changed was the way that I grew. You know, we had episodes every week that dealt with-that dealt with corruption for a myriad of reasons and all kinds of biases.

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You know, we deal with racial bias, sexual bias, you know, gender bias, sex orientation, religious bias. I mean, we get these scripts, and at the heart of every script is-is a massive subject to unpack. And we are trying to make a television show, not a, you know, philosophical documentary, right?--about where we all sit around and talk about our feelings and experiences and try to figure out. But that's what we did behind the scenes. Because you don't get a script like that, if you have a cast like we have, that is incredibly engaged and thoughtful, and wants to participate in the conversation--you don't get those scripts and then not immediately start--brrrrrr. And it was a really amazing thing for me. I keep repeating this phrase, 'cause I think it's so important. My sister calls is--she says, when we start difficult conversations in our family, my sister stops when we're about to enter into challenging territory of any kind.

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And she goes, "Wait, wait, wait." And she announces assumption of good will. And it's such a beautiful thing. And I've started to do it in my regular life, in conversations with people that I'm comfortable with and people I'm uncomfortable with. I go, "Hold on. If we're gonna do this, let's give each other--let's have"--whether it's a group or individually--"let's have assumption of good will." Because these conversations don't result in progress unless people are allowed to, A, be honest in ways that might incriminate them in the conversation, or B, they are allowed to admit ignorance either my admission or by demonstrating ignorance in what they're saying. And those things need grace. They need the other person not to attack, not to launch into diatribe. And they need the other person to just stop and inform

and educate and offer an opportunity. Now, if the person doesn't take the opportunity, that's a different conversation.

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But if the person is gonna take the opportunity, the only way to know that is to give it to them. And that's what happened with--as Danny pointed out, we have a diverse cast, and it was an opportunity, behind the scenes, each time, for me to go to my castmates and say-and say, "I-I understand this only on the surface. Please--can you explain this to me? Can you broaden this me? Can you deepen this for me?" Or, to do the opposite, to say, "Actually, I understand that you have your back up a bit. But let me give you my perspective, and let me give you an alternative way to--let me reframe that for you." And that's how we functioned every day on set. And it was-it was the most--for that single reason, in addition to everybody just being lovely and us having a great making a good television show--for that reason was the single most gratifying work experience I've ever had.

DANNY STRONG: Amazing cast, isn't it?

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Yeah.

DANNY STRONG: I mean, everyone is so-so thoughtful and well-said.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: [inaudible] assumption.

DANNY STRONG: And incredible actors.

[00:32:00]

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: What was it--assumption of good will?

DANNY STRONG: Assumption of good will. I just had one, when I-when I said that. You know, for me, what it brought to me is what I'm hoping that the show brings to everyone, which is awareness. You know, awareness, empathy. We take a look into many people that aren't--that don't get a voice in a mainstream platform, to give them that voice. And for me, I'm fascinated about learning about them, and about learning of people that aren't myself, you know? I have a lot of friends that are funny, Jewish writers. You know? Like, I don't need to write a whoever about them. Right? So, it's--what was that?

KELSEY GRAMMER: I was just think go Ms. Maisel.

DANNY STRONG: Yeah, yeah. Although I love that show. I mean, I really love that show.

KELSEY GRAMMER: There was room for one.

DANNY STRONG: You know. But-but so-so, you know, we do a transgender episode.

[00:32:59]

We have a death penalty, two-part episode. You know, we have an episode on shaken baby syndrome. I didn't know anything about shaken baby syndrome. I'm blown away by it. You know, that the science has been debunked. There are women in prison who supposedly shook their babies to death, but the baby just could have fallen and hit its head. You know, it's a tragedy. And so to be able to shine a light on that issue, I'm proud of that. But I just want to shine the light, you know? I just want--people need to

know about this. I didn't know about it. And now we have a platform to tell millions of people about it. And we do it, episode and episode, you know? So, for me, it's about, you know, that aware--and there's a bias. There's a general bias for people that have been found guilty, which is, "Well, if you were found guilty, you went through this process, you must be guilty." Right? And many of them are guilty, right? But for that small percentage that isn't--

[00:33:58]

Perhaps when they're now going through the process of having a retrial--you know, if people on the jury have seen the show, they may be more empathetic. They may want to give them, you know--you know, they just want to look deeper into this issue, into this case. "Like, did this really happen? What did really happen?" In so many wrongful convictions that we read about in the news, they happen because of DNA evidence--the persons details released because of DNA. Because that's conclusive, right? Well, what about all the cases where there is no DNA evidence? And that is where many of our storylines--come from those cases. So, you know, to give that awareness, a sense of empathy for individuals and for, you know, the system in its totality is the goal of the show. And, by the way, to have a really entertaining show. I mean, our show is exciting. It's cool. It's funny. It's emotional. It's not just this relentless, dressing, "Oh my God, this is so horrible." And that's actually the challenge with the subject material, to be able to do that.

KELSEY GRAMMER: You know, it's interesting.

[00:34:59]

I just--I'm sitting here just thinking. You know, there's a great play called "12 Angry Men." Is--did Paddy Chayefsky write it?

DANNY STRONG: No. It wasn't. But--

KELSEY GRAMMER: But-so Sidney Lumet directs this movie. It's fantastic. But this is what we do. we call attention to things that maybe need a second look.

DANNY STRONG: Yeah.

KELSEY GRAMMER: That make think a little bit. And it does--it serves the same purpose. It's a fantastic, compelling film about a group of jurors sitting in a room, and that dedication that suddenly these 12 people have to find the right thing out. And I think doing the right thing is still a wonderful focal striving. And I-I'm pleased to actually be part of a striving situation. Not gonna offer any answers. I'm just gonna--like I said, hopefully some good questions. And this is-this is--it's a pleasure to be part of it. Thank you.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: Stop.

[00:35:57]

Tell me, also--it's a small, tiny little thing, but people sometimes ask, you know--when people are moved, they often ask, "What can I do?" And something interested happened after--between the pilot and--I became a citizen of the--I'm Canadian. I became a United States citizen a year ago today.

KELSEY GRAMMER: Welcome.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: Thank you. And--thank you. And-and because I had a green card, I'm on the list. I don't know how the system is--it's a bureaucracy, but I got the list--I got--I'm on the list. I get invited to go--I get the jury summons, right?--to go participate and be on a jury. And I-I have to check--every year, I have to check box that says "Not a citizen" and send it back, 'cause I've had my green card.

KELSEY GRAMMER: [inaudible].

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: And we shot the pilot, and then between the pilot and doing the series, I went home to Los Angeles and I-I got one. And I thought--and it's really bad, 'cause I ended up having something I actually couldn't move, and couldn't do it. I can't believe I'm gonna say this. it's hypocritical. But when I got it, my thought was, "Oh. And I've just done this show. And I'm a citizen.

[00:37:00]

"And I've just done this show." and I spent--I shot the pilot, and I kept thinking, like, "How can I help? What can I do?" And this thing that I would get in the mail that seemed like such an irritation, right? Such an, "Ugh, I've got, like, jury duty." And my friends are like, "ugh, jury duty." And I went, "Oh." That things that comes in the mail is an invitation to participate in the process. And so even tiny, little things like that now--my view is sort of different. Yeah.

KELSEY GRAMMER: It's a little more than an invitation, actually. But.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

KELSEY GRAMMER: Sort of, like, you know--kind of a penalty involved.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: The invitation--

KELSEY GRAMMER: If you lie or don't show up.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: The invitation is to participant with all of the--with all of what's in you and not just sit there, I guess. Yeah.

KELSEY GRAMMER: it's supposed to be a privilege. I know. But it is inconvenient sometimes.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: It is. Like, it's funny. Like, we're having this amazing, engaged conversation about social justice, and then you go home and you get your jury summons. "Ugh."

KELSEY GRAMMER: "Ugh." Very, very nicely put.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: Just a thought.

[00:38:00]

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Well now, when people get that and they've seen the show, they can consider that there's something, like, a forced confession.

KELSEY GRAMMER: Right.

MALIKA SAADA SAAR: Or prosecutorial overreach. And those-those kinds of ways in which we demystify, I think, are important. And who we center in the storytelling is so critical. So, again, thank you. And it's such a privilege to have you here at Google.

KELSEY GRAMMER: Thank you.

RACHELLE LEFEVRE: Thank you.

RUSSELL HORNSBY: Thank you.

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