

00:00:03

Jenny Curtis: Hello listeners and movie lovers, this is Jenny Curtis, producer of Hollywood Unscripted. We hope that you are staying safe and healthy. While we are on a season break, we will be bringing you a series of specials throughout this time. We ask that you forgive the audio quality as we are all recording from home on whatever technology is available. We hope that bringing you more conversations with the creatives you admire can help brighten your days in this trying time. So, without further ado, we present Hollywood Unscripted: Stuck at Home.

00:00:36

Speaker 2: From Curtco Media.

00:00:37

Speaker 3: There's no place like Hollywood.

00:00:50

Scott Talal: Welcome to a special edition of Hollywood Unscripted: Stuck at Home edition. I'm Scott Talal, executive director of the Malibu Film Society, and today's guests are actor Don Cheadle and show runners, Jordan Cahan, and David Caspe from the Showtime series Black Monday. Welcome, gentlemen.

00:01:09

David Caspe: Thank you. Glad to be here.

00:01:09

Don Cheadle: Hi.

00:01:09

Jordan Cahan: Hello.

00:01:11

Scott Talal: We're recording the show April first. It's the third week of California stay at home order. I just wanted to ask, how's everybody holding up right now?

00:01:19

Don Cheadle: Pretty good, considering everything. I don't think I got the 'rona. I couldn't say for sure. Obviously, because people can be asymptomatic and still be carriers. But everybody who I've sneezed on to see and to test has not come back positive, so pretty good over here.

00:01:39

David Caspe: There's not a lack of testing in your home. You've developed your own test.

00:01:43

Don Cheadle: Yeah. I think when you're in the field, as I am, we all are, but I'm in my own Petri dish. You have to do what you have to do to practice safe meing. And so that meant I have to try to transmit it, see if it comes back. I'm doing a little science on my own.

00:02:00

David Caspe: We're hanging in. I mean, obviously there's so many people in such a worse situation than the three of us you're asking that question to. So we're super fortunate to even have the option of just how are we hanging in, in a work from home, be with our families situation. There's obviously so many people in such a worse situation. It's just the darkest time we've experienced in a while, and our hearts go out to everybody.

00:02:24

Jordan Cahan: I would say for me, the one thing that I'm enjoying in this difficult time is I get to sit with my daughter, who's in third grade, and teach her math. And that's been really nice. We shoot Black Monday, we're on a pretty rigorous schedule. We're doing long days and stuff. Not that there's any silver lining to this, but it's been nice to teach math fractions.

00:02:53

Scott Talal: So, this is obviously an odd time for everybody.

00:02:56

David Caspe: Trump seems unbothered. It doesn't seem like that odd of a time for him.

00:03:00

Don Cheadle: It was pretty startling to watch the press conference yesterday and hear Fauci speaking about if we do this perfectly, we could maybe get between 100,000 and 240,000 deaths, if we do it great. I really hope Americans are ready to all pull together and do it great. But like we were talking about, people are still congregating on beaches and having church (inaudible) and a lot of folks are acting like, because they don't have it, there's no problem, that they can perceive that they have it because they're asymptomatic.

So yeah, it's a very interesting time and a very interesting time to be doing a show called Black Monday, with the stock market doing what it's doing, and what we're looking forward to. But I think it's also a perfect time for it because who doesn't need a break from all of this to just laugh at the ridiculousness of it.

00:03:45

Scott Talal: David, I read an interview, some of the pre-season two publicity that you were doing, and you were talking about how you could theoretically take this show into the nineties and then into the 2000s, right up until the 2008 crash. And then even

beyond until the next crash. And, of course, this was several weeks ago when you said, "Of course, that's assuming we don't have a catastrophe before the next crash." Well, we got both.

00:04:11

David Caspe: I said that?

00:04:11

Don Cheadle: Yeah. Thanks a lot, David. Good job, buddy.

00:04:14

David Caspe: (crosstalk) That sounds like a [inaudible 00:04:16]. I think we'll all keep going as long as they'll let us, right? We had initially chosen the Lehman Brothers because we started writing this a little right after that '08 crash and Lehman Brothers went under, which was so crazy. So we just thought wouldn't that be funny if the two villains in the show are the Lehman Brothers, the actual brothers. And of course, we made them twins that may or may not be having sex with each other. So it's divorced from reality a little bit. Yeah, we always imagined that the whole series would end in '08, but who knows.

00:04:47

Jordan Cahan: Yeah, it's strange but we've had four black Mondays in the past two months or something.

00:04:54

Don Cheadle: Exactly, yeah.

00:04:55

Jordan Cahan: The timing was incredibly bizarre.

00:04:57

Scott Talal: We've got, obviously, the showrunners, the writers and the session, as well as Don the actor. But for the writers, writers can write at home. Actors, what do you do at home during this time?

00:05:06

Don Cheadle: It's interesting. I have a script that I haven't been working on for the past season. I have a production company, so we're still having meetings around things, which is very interesting. We were talking before we went online about Zoom stock zooming through the roof right now probably. But yeah, I had two projects that we were just getting ready to start. This would have been day three for me on the set on one of them.

00:05:27

David Caspe: Oh, really?

00:05:28

Don Cheadle: Yeah.

00:05:28

Scott Talal: Can you say which one, Don?

00:05:29

Don Cheadle: Kill Switch. It was a Steven Soderbergh movie. We'll see if it comes back. Who knows? And I think that's where everything is for everyone right now.

Piggybacking on what David said, I'm not crying poor me because I believe when everything comes back, we'll have the ability to go back to work, hopefully. I don't know how far we're going to have to be staying away from each other, it's going to be very interesting to be doing scenes if you have to stay 10 feet away from your scene partners.

00:05:56

Jordan Cahan: The second that someone else is covered, you leave anyways. So it's kind of perfect, right?

00:05:56

Don Cheadle: That's true. I don't stay for off-camera. Thanks for letting Scott know that. I barely stay for my own coverage.

00:06:06

Jordan Cahan: It's just the back of your head most of the time.

00:06:06

Don Cheadle: That's all contractual though. That doesn't have to do with me. That's agent stuff. (inaudible) I think we just hunker down and try to get ready for when we can come back and do stuff. I mean, it definitely gives us the opportunity to do tons more research. I'm reading a ton of stuff. So there you go.

00:06:22

Scott Talal: How many of you have kids at home? Because Don, I know that you and Bridgid have a couple.

00:06:26

Don Cheadle: Yeah, they're out, thankfully. They left last year. I finally got them out of the door. They're 11 and 14, but they're a very mature 11 and 14.

00:06:35

Scott Talal: Jordan?

00:06:36

Jordan Cahan: I have a five year old and an eight year-old.

00:06:39

David Caspe: I have two and a half and four and a half.

00:06:41

Don Cheadle: Wow.

00:06:42

Scott Talal: So you're in the thick of it my friend.

00:06:44

David Caspe: It's funny because, not to get weirdly melodramatic, but obviously always in life, there's things that give you a bunch of perspective. And man, this is a perspective thing I don't think any of us saw coming. I mean, this is insane. I mean just across the board, everything, like what a luxury it is to leave your home, how hard working the people are who teach your kids or watch your kids, if you have two working parents or whatever. The list goes on, it's hundreds and hundreds of things.

00:07:12

Don Cheadle: Are your kids wondering why you and Casey are you home so much?

00:07:14

David Caspe: Honestly, they're in the best moods I've ever seen them in. And I think it's just because they love that we're around all the time. And I have definitely been home for every dinner in a way that I never was before. (inaudible) you remove all the travel time, and so many of the deadlines have relaxed in a way that I'm able to have dinner with them, which it's been really nice. But there's also this underlying dread that I'm sure we all feel of why it's happening, is so dark and heartbreaking. It's just horrible, it's just horrible.

00:07:41

Jordan Cahan: I will say that, speaking specifically about the show, when we're in the thick of it in the show, no matter how much fun we're having, I think we could all agree, we have a great time on this show and we're incredibly fortunate that everyone on the cast and crew is so awesome. But it's still a grind. David and I and Don, you're still working 18, 19, 20 hour days, some days. And in the middle of a season when you're trying to edit and you're running from stage to stage and setting up shots and making sure everything's okay and putting out fires, you feel that grind. And I cannot tell you how much I appreciate it now, now that I'm not doing it. Honestly, we are so immensely fortunate.

00:08:26

Don Cheadle: Well, your kids hate you.

00:08:27

Jordan Cahan: No, it's true.

00:08:28

David Caspe: I'm lucky that my kids are in preschool. So there's not really a lesson plan or anything. So I'm not having to teach, which seems brutal.

00:08:35

Scott Talal: It's interesting because talking about family, the show had so many family connections. I mean your wife, Casey, plays Tiffany Georgina and her comedy writing partner, June Raphael.

00:08:46

David Caspe: June Diane Raphael.

00:08:47

Scott Talal: Yeah. Plays Corky Harris. Her husband is Paul Scheer, Who's also on the show. It seems like a nice, big happy family.

00:08:54

Jordan Cahan: Yeah, it goes way beyond that. Don's wife, Bridgid, is the wife of a Black Panther friend of his that she's in episode three. Our costume designer, Melissa, her husband, played the private investigator in season one and season two.

00:09:11

David Caspe: Tuc Watkins who plays Congressman Harris, which is Blair's love interest this year, is Andrew Rannells boyfriend in real life.

00:09:18

Scott Talal: So you're saying their chemistry is genuine.

00:09:21

Jordan Cahan: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

00:09:22

David Caspe: Yassir Lester, who's on the show and also writes for the show, in episode four that he wrote, his girlfriend, Chelsea Devantez, is in that episode. She runs up asking Regina for a photograph at the beginning.

00:09:35

Jordan Cahan: June's sister, Deanna, is racially profiling her in season one and then

joins the TBD group in season two.

00:09:45

David Caspe: Our writer, Amelie Gillette, who wrote episode two, her husband is a guy named Mark Proksch.

00:09:51

Jordan Cahan: Amazing.

00:09:52

David Caspe: He plays the bank manager that Cheadle and Scheer were in all that stuff with, in the shootout episode.

00:09:58

Jordan Cahan: Also Janelle James is a writer on our show. He is one of the women in the office. We have Bridger who is a writer on our show. He plays the concierge of the hotel that Mo lives at.

00:10:13

David Caspe: And his boyfriend plays, in episode five, he plays a prison guard.

00:10:17

Don Cheadle: So nepotism basically is what you're talking about. This started off with family and then it turned into we only hire our friends.

00:10:24

David Caspe: It's easier than that. It's if they're within arms reach, we use them on the show.

00:10:31

Don Cheadle: I'm in a show.

00:10:32

David Caspe: I'm sorry. What were you saying?

00:10:39

Don Cheadle: Sorry, I just took it back to me for a second.

00:10:39

David Caspe: Yeah. Let's get it back to what's important.

00:10:40

Scott Talal: It's obviously not endemic to Hollywood. It's all business. You want to surround yourself with people who know will do a good job.

00:10:48

David Caspe: It's part of the fun of it, for us at least, is working with people we know and love, but also people who are so immensely talented. I don't know if we ever would have landed June without her being married to Paul. She's so good. Or getting Brigid to come on. Again, we're immensely fortunate on this show. Every time I think about the show, I'm like, "Man, we got lucky there. We got lucky there. We got lucky there."

00:11:16

Scott Talal: The casting has been amazing. Let's go back to the beginning of this, the genesis. Because as I understand it, you actually were trading emails and conversations about this as far back as 2007?

00:11:27

David Caspe: Very long time. And then we sold it to Showtime and we wrote the script and we kind of got close, but then didn't happen and then-

00:11:33

Don Cheadle: Didn't you guys say that Billions happened and you guys were like, "Oh, well now it's never going to happen."

00:11:36

David Caspe: Basically. Yeah. It seemed like they probably wouldn't do two Wall Street shows. And then I think they slowly realized that our show has basically nothing to do with Wall Street. But yeah, when Cheadle and Seth and Evan came on, then obviously they made it because you're going to make whatever Cheadle wants to do next.

00:11:53

Scott Talal: Talking about your executive producers, you have Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg.

00:11:57

David Caspe: Yeah. When they came on to direct and when Cheadle came on to star in it, then Showtime was like, "Yes, let's make it."

00:12:03

Scott Talal: It's still remarkable. You hear about movies that are 10, 12 years or in development or longer, but for a series, that's not so normal.

00:12:11

Jordan Cahan: I remember when we thought we were dead because Wall Street Two had come up, Money Never Sleeps.

00:12:17

Don Cheadle: Money Never Sleeps, that's right.

00:12:18

Jordan Cahan: So Wall Street Two came out. We're like, "Okay, we're dead." And then Wolf of Wall Street came out and we were dead. And then they bought Billions and we were like, "We're dead." But we kept hanging around.

00:12:31

Scott Talal: What took you to this content though, because this happened when we were all a lot younger and I'm older than you guys. I remember it very well. But Black Monday, October 19th, 1987 was wild.

00:12:44

David Caspe: Yeah, it was a day before my ninth birthday. My dad was a commodity trader in Chicago, a soybean trader. And so he always told me crazy stories about all this shit that, I mean, he claimed that he would just sort of see on his way home and stuff. I would leave on Friday, waves of prostitutes would walk in and all these guys would do coke. I could see him on the other end of the floor and stuff. And writer quickly pointed out like, "Oh, sorry, you believe that your dad just happened to know about and see all this stuff in explicit detail, but did not participate in it?" I like to hold onto that.

And then maybe he did it, but who knows? But yeah, he would tell crazy stories (inaudible) excess is always funny because it's so stupid.

And the 80s Excess, particularly, we always say the movie Wall Street, which was like an Oscar nominated drama, had a robot butler in it. I mean, if the robot butler's in the drama, then we're not going to have to stretch reality at all to be broad because that's as broad as it gets. So you have the comedy right there and then you have the drama and the stakes, you can lose all your money. I mean, it's the only job I can think of where you actually can lose money. A lot of people can go in and not sell a car that day. So they didn't make money. But very rarely do you go in and they're like, "Okay, we're going to take all the money you made the last three years away from your bank."

00:13:58

Jordan Cahan: For our show, which totally is admittedly purposely kind of all over the place. It felt like a fun way to do something where the stakes could not be higher in a business world. And yet it's such a ridiculous, intense pressure cooker. But again, dramas like Scarface, the guy owns a Bengal tiger. It's just insane.

00:14:21

Scott Talal: We know this happened in '87, '87 was also the year that Bonfire of the Vanities was published by Tom Wolfe.

00:14:27

Jordan Cahan: That was really influential. I loved that book, and there's an episode of season one where they get lost in the middle of the city and it's kind of this no man's land. And that was a little bit inspired by the inciting incident, I guess you'd say, of *Bonfire of the Vanities* where he's driving with his mistress and they get lost in New York. It's like they're lost in a third world country in the middle of the city. And so we thought that that would be a really cool way to kind of honor some of the inspiration.

00:15:02

Scott Talal: Of course, Wall Street. And as you said, Wall Street two later, but Wall Street had come out, but this was still six years before the *Wolf of Wall Street*.

00:15:09

Speaker 2: Yeah. In the second episode, we really wanted to capitalize on the comparisons to the movie *Wall Street* by having the Hollywood screenwriter come in and everything. And it was our way of kind of jumping all over that, but also hopefully putting it to bed a little bit. We were making fun of it, and having fun with the comparisons to it and saying that Maurice Monroe was kind of the model for-

00:15:31

Jordan Cahan: Gordon Gekko.

00:15:31

David Caspe: Yeah.

00:15:32

Scott Talal: Gordon Gekko, yeah. You had started in on development in 2007-

00:15:36

David Caspe: Well, I mean, started in like having breakfast and being like, "Hey, wouldn't it be fun to write a show about Wall Street or Black Monday?" But we were both doing other things separately for a long time. So it was slow development. Probably didn't go in and pitch it until like 2011 or something like that.

00:15:53

Scott Talal: So what was the elevator pitch?

00:15:55

David Caspe: Oh, gosh. It would have to be an elevator from like, floor zero to like, 1050.

00:16:00

Don Cheadle: You were pitching for sure. Cause I know you went on. They were like, "Just what is it, David?" You're like, "I'm getting to it!"

00:16:07

David Caspe: They basically bought it to shut us the fuck up. They were just like, " If we (inaudible) this, will you leave?"

00:16:16

Scott Talal: So, when did you get it in front of Seth Rogan and his producing partner, Evan Goldberg?

00:16:20

David Caspe: When did we shoot the pilot, guys? 2018 or something? Or '17, or what?

00:16:24

Jordan Cahan: '17, maybe. I don't remember.

00:16:26

David Caspe: So, probably about a year before that.

00:16:28

Jordan Cahan: And they're such bright guys that it was really cool, but David, I think had had a meeting with Evan. Right, Dave?

00:16:34

David Caspe: Yeah. I had a meeting just about a movie thing with Devin and he read a few of my scripts and that was one of them. He's like, " Oh, that was really funny. What's going on with that?" I was like, " Nothing. You guys should direct it." And he was like, " All right, I'll bring it up to Seth," and Seth liked it. And so then it was sort of a question of Showtime would do it obviously only with someone great. And then Don said yes.

00:16:55

Scott Talal: Yeah, I understand it was Seth who had recommended Don.

00:16:56

Don Cheadle: I'm not sure. I had a meeting with David Nevins.

00:16:59

Scott Talal: CEO of Showtime?

00:17:00

Don Cheadle: Yeah, when he first called me, he said, " Hey, I'm thinking of this show. I got this show that I'm thinking about, and I don't think it's right for you."

00:17:08

Scott Talal: He knows how to press your buttons.

00:17:10

Don Cheadle: I think he was just processing his stuff out loud. He was like, " But I'm just thinking about it. I was like, " Okay, I'll talk to you later." And I didn't talk to him. We didn't talk again for weeks. And then he called me back and said, " Do you know what? Actually, I've been thinking about it. I think maybe you would be good for this. Let's get together and talk about it."

00:17:27

Scott Talal: You had just come off of several seasons of House of Lies for Showtime.

00:17:32

Don Cheadle: Correct.

00:17:32

Scott Talal: Playing Marty Kaan, who, while not the same as Maurice Monroe, along the same lines as.

00:17:39

Don Cheadle: It's dealing with, obviously, in the financial world, but completely different aspects. And he's a person who is [inaudible 00:17: 46], Mo is [inaudible 00:17:46]. No family to sort of anchor him or anything. Just bananas. I think this is a true, true comedy. House of Lies was a comedy, but it had much more down notes than this has. And I think that's what David was dealing with. Kind of going, " Is there enough of a separation? Is it something that just be sort of a redo? Is this something that will work?" And he was just kind of processing this out loud to me and saying, " So I just wanted to let you know, I was not sure, but these are the things I was thinking about." I said, " Okay, well let me know if anything settles in your brain."

And then he called me a few weeks later and was like, " No, actually I thought about it. I do think this could work with you. And do you want to meet David and Jordan?" And I said, " Yes." We kind of had a two part meal/ dinner and chopped it up. Right guys? Remember that? Unless it was at lunch, I think it was ... Was it lunch or dinner? I don't know [crosstalk 00:18:33].

00:18:33

David Caspe: I think it started with a dinner, but I'll never forget because it got me so excited. I was like, " Holy shit, we're going to sit down with Don Cheadle about this." And one of the first things you said, Don, was, you were like, " Yeah, these monologues are fucking insane. And then he said, " I was reading one to my wife, just being like 'can I even say some of this stuff?'" And we had never met Bridgid and I know [inaudible 00:18:59].

But I was like, " Oh my God, Don Cheadle was reading our show to his wife!"

Concerned about how insane it is. I was like, " At least he's on the same wavelength

as us." Because I think we're a little concerned about how far we went, too.

00:19:13

Don Cheadle: Yeah.

00:19:14

David Caspe: And then once Don was in, we'd spent so much time together with him, just developing it into a character that fits him more and also gets away from anything that is similar to Marty. And it doesn't seem similar to me. I mean, especially now do we even say Mo's in the financial world? He plays bass in a hotel band in Miami. It's pretty far away from it. But yeah, I think his assessment's right, is that Mo is all (inaudible) Marty was always in control, which is basically polar opposite. But yeah, the three of us really from the beginning clicked and developed it together and Don calls me one of his best friends at this point.

00:19:48

Don Cheadle: I did (inaudible) until I saw your hair. And I was like, " He's trying to boy band it. We can't be friends anymore."

00:19:59

David Caspe: I had strange days over here.

00:20:01

Scott Talal: I do have one question about the preparation for season opener of season two because, Don, there was a time you had the wig on, you had the goatee going-

00:20:10

Don Cheadle: What wig?

00:20:13

Scott Talal: And you looked in the mirror, your reaction.

00:20:16

Don Cheadle: I mean, it was fitting. It made sense, obviously Mo's trying to hide and he's on the lam. We spent quite a bit of time over a hiatus talking about what was going to be coming in the writer's room, putting pictures up on the board, getting reactions. We spent a lot of time trying to figure out which iteration of Mo we thought would work and not just who he was going to be then, but who he would then become, when he's going to try to return. And what does Mo think is hot? What does Mo think is the look that he needs to have? It's not just about hiding out. It's also about looking good when you're wearing a sleeveless t-shirt [inaudible 00:20: 55].

00:20:55

David Caspe: I love the long hair so much.

00:20:57

Scott Talal: Was there any part of you that liked how the long hair looked?

00:21:00

Don Cheadle: It grew on me, so to speak.

00:21:04

David Caspe: I love in the show, how you deal with the long hair, Don, so naturally that he's full doing like the flips and the hand coming back, all this shit that you would do with long hair. I mean, the stuff that I still dream about, he was doing all that. So, naturally, I could tell that there was a part of him at least, that appreciated getting to do that. It was fun.

00:21:26

Don Cheadle: You have to make it yours, right? Can't look like a foreign animal on top of your head. Again, I think all of this stuff plays into who this insane dude is. And that of course he would do that, of course he would go that far into that extreme and then figure out the next move should be like Lando Calrissian. (inaudible) It all fit in the world of Black Monday for sure. And it all made sense for me for Mo 100%.

00:21:58

David Caspe: It kind of helped the journey too, because season one, the character takes such a strong journey. I would say he kind of realizes that you can only walk on that tight rope for so long. He really gets stabbed in the back. He gets (inaudible) twice at the end of season one. So it felt like we needed to start him somewhere in a new journey for season two that I'm excited to to expose to people soon.

And if we get a third season, I think the first thing we'll probably talk about, again, is [inaudible 00:22: 29], how is Mo's (inaudible) in the early '90s.

00:22:34

Don Cheadle: You almost have it, David. You're [inaudible 00:22: 38].

00:22:47

Jenny Curtis: Hello out there. This is Jenny Curtis. I am a podcast producer at Curtco media. And I am currently sitting alone in a very empty podcast studio, surrounded by hand sanitizer. And I'm recording this in an effort to reach out. It's not an easy time right now. We don't know what the day to day is going to look like for the next few weeks, even months. So I'm proposing something, let's all make something together. Curtco media has launched a podcast called A Moment of Your Time. These are bite-sized episodes and each one features you, out there. Go to [Curtco.com/AMomentOfYourTime](https://Curtco.com/AMomentOfYourTime) for more information.

We may have to stay apart, but let's create. Together.

00:23:35

Scott Talal: So, the show is called Black Monday and the show is ostensibly about how this wild and crazy group of traders were secretly responsible for the Black Monday crash of Wall Street. But season one ends with the crash of Wall Street. At this point, you have to decide where do we go now and where do our characters go now?

00:24:09

Jordan Cahan: Well, I think we felt it was really important to ... I love mysteries, and so one of the mysteries that we didn't hit on the head on purpose is, by the end of season one, we wanted people to be satisfied as far as who was behind Black Monday. I think that's definitive. I think the question for season two is who's going down for Black Monday? If it was manmade, if it was manufactured, which is what we're positive in our alternate history timeline, that might as well be real, who ultimately has to suffer the consequences of that. And that really is the back half of season two is as alliances get tested and all of that, it's kind of like who is going to take the fall for this giant act of global terrorism or every financial terrorist?

00:25:00

David Caspe: We had zero plan, if that's the question. We had zero plan. I don't think we ever really expected the show to get made period, much less get all the way through the first season and get a second season. So yeah, we definitely left the second season being like, "Okay." When we got into the writer's room, we were just like, "All right, so Mo's fled, the FBI has to be probably after him. What would they be after him for?"

And then we got to like, well, he killed two people.

00:25:26

Don Cheadle: No, he didn't! No, he didn't. You keep saying that. [crosstalk 00:25:32].

00:25:29

Scott Talal: Defend your character.

00:25:34

Jordan Cahan: We have an awesome team of writers overall, two seasons, so many great writers. And everybody just kind of pitched what they thought would be a funny place to take it. And Don pitched, and Regina pitched, and Andrew, and Paul and everyone, and my wife pitched her hair. She said, "Look, the one thing I want is a Princess Di bouffant and whatever else, is up to you."

We'll take ideas from anywhere.

00:25:55

David Caspe: Yeah. I mean, talking about fortunate, our writers, we have been so, I mean, it's just amazing how, when I talk about how brilliant the cast is, the fact that we get to work with these writers for two seasons is unbelievable. I could go through

every name of every person now, but we got so lucky that all these writers were willing to jump in and do something with us that's so stupid.

00:26:22

Scott Talal: Don, when you get the script, talk to us about that.

00:26:25

Don Cheadle: Getting the script?

00:26:27

Scott Talal: Yeah, because what they have Mo doing, and saying ...

00:26:30

Don Cheadle: Well, that's what a lot of the calls are before we get to the table. I'm like so, we're going to say this tomorrow, right guys? We're all agreed that I'm going to say these certain lines. And I tell them, sometimes, there's some things I'm just like, "No, we're not doing that." I'm like, "If you guys want to step in during that part and do the lines, that's fine, but I'm not saying [inaudible 00:26:52]."

So, there's always a negotiation around things. But I will say honestly that those moments are rare. I'm usually 100% onboard with everything that we're doing and wanting to push it further. And in a show like this, with these characters at this time, you do have to walk a line in some ways, but if you're not leaning in to some of the misogyny and some of the racism and some of the, all the isms and ogyies these guys are rife with, you wouldn't really be doing the time period. You wouldn't be doing it legitimate. So that's a lot of it is trying to figure out how far can we step on that line? And sometimes you don't know until you're across it. And you're like, "Okay, that's too far. Let's pull it back." But we're always trying to push it.

00:27:33

Scott Talal: Well, that's the interesting thing is because you're doing the late '80s with all of those excesses, but you're also talking about today.

00:27:41

Don Cheadle: Correct. And I think that's when the show is working at its optimal level. That's what we're able to do, is to make fun of that time. But at the same time, sort of draw a line between how we got here from there and how a lot of it is circular and cyclical. And we're not really going to get past it.

One of the things, when we were doing the research for the show, one of the books that I was reading was talking about this was sort of the era when all of these regulations were just being put in place. It was kind of the wild, Wild West before people like Milken came in and did what he did. Everybody was doing it. He just did it at such a level that they went, "Okay, we got to do something about this. It's gone. It's too big now."

And even as we can see today, the one thing that you can not excise from this

process is people. And people's inherent desire to get over in greed and grit. And if there's a way to game it, they're going to game it. So we put all these regulations in place, try to protect people, try to protect the process and not have people get robbed blind, but there will be. And there will always be someone who's going to figure out a way to get around the rules and make it work for them. And it's just up to are people going to do anything about it? And I think that's what's fun about the show is to keep getting our characters in those positions where they're doing all of this stuff and figure out now what? Paint them into a corner.

00:28:58

Jordan Cahan: This is not a tagline, but one of the things that David and I, what I was (inaudible) about is one of the rules of the show is kind of look how far we haven't come. And it's just seeing that drug, that line and that parallel to now and saying that despite the '80s being years and years ago, it still feels like all of these issues are just still bubbling to the surface all the time.

00:29:22

David Caspe: And we discover some shocking ones. There's a joke that's coming up in a few episodes. That's just about what are classic boy's clubs, where there's not really women, they're like country clubs or the boardroom of a fortune 500 company back in the '80s we're talking about. And we discovered that legally women weren't allowed on the Senate floor in pants until like the early '90s, which is shocking. I mean, I was born in '78, the '90s, I was a person. You stumble on some of that. You're like, "They weren't allowed to wear pants?" Women were not allowed to wear pants on the Senate floor up until like '92 or something like that.

00:29:58

Don Cheadle: If we can't see your legs, it's distracting when you're trying to get (inaudible) legislation through. I can't see your legs. I can't be sure you're really sincere about this bill.

00:30:09

David Caspe: So crazy.

00:30:11

Jordan Cahan: (inaudible) correlation [crosstalk 00:00:30:12].

00:30:12

Don Cheadle: I get it. No, I get it. I'm trying to explain it to David, why that would be.

00:30:17

David Caspe: Stuff like that, that just shows you how far we haven't come and how far, yeah.

00:30:22

Don Cheadle: Well, who knew? I mean, aside from the point of whether or not we get more seasons or not, who knew that you would never be at a loss for material. Jordan said earlier now we've had three Black Mondays in the last month. You're never going to run out of material in that area.

00:30:38

David Caspe: No.

00:30:38

Jordan Cahan: Sadly, it's true.

00:30:39

Scott Talal: Don, you're famously a activist in a lot of causes. That seems to be a passion of yours outside of acting, outside of producing. What are the causes you're supporting today?

00:30:49

Don Cheadle: A lot of times we're trying to figure out timing on things. And it's such a 24 hour news cycle around what's happening right now with our country and the pandemic and always trying to figure out how to speak about climate and keep that in the forefront. As the EPA is easing more and more restrictions and everything's sort of happening behind closed doors while we're focused on this and trying to keep that front and center in different ways. Work with a group called The Solutions Project. I'm on the board, Mark Ruffalo sits on the board, he got me on the board. And we were doing some work with the USDA around the US open this year, trying to focus on some water mitigation things and some community facing stuff that was happening. But now that's pushed.

So it's constantly trying to find the right time and way to draw attention to these issues. And we're always fighting for space because the most sensationalistic thing leads and unless there's a national disaster at your feet, and you could point to that and show some cause and effect, it's hard to get the attention for something like climate change, right now.

00:31:57

Scott Talal: I don't know if obligation is the right word, but can you talk to us about-

00:32:01

Don Cheadle: Is there an obligation?

00:32:02

Scott Talal: No, just using your platform.

00:32:05

Don Cheadle: I guess, really, at the end of the day, it's a personal thing for each individual to figure out where you get in, where you fit in and what their responsibility is. Are they obligated to use your word to give back once you have this ability to be in the spotlight and direct people's attention toward the things that are important to you? I personally feel that it is, for me. And it probably comes from my parents. It probably comes from my family and always being told that it's your job, quote, unquote, to speak up when you think something's not right. Not just for yourself, but for whoever, for those who can't. And it's something that was demonstrated for me. So this happened before I had a platform, I was vocal about things before anybody gave a shit about who I was to listen to anything I had to say.

So it's just consistent for me. It's a continuum, but yeah, I think, and I've been very lucky to work with a lot of people who are like minded. We started Not on Our Watch with George Clooney and Matt Damon and Brad Pitt and Jerry Weintraub. So it's been sort of throughout my career that I've worked with, like I said, Mark, Ruffalo working on the solutions project together. I've been very fortunate to work with people who do feel it is their obligation and do want to take the light that shown on them and try to shine it on people that need the attention. And it's a more rewarding thing to do than just try to cut lines at restaurants and get a bunch of perks for stuff. It's being able to actually use this to highlight people who've been on the front lines of these issues for a long time and are really struggling to get purchase. So I feel honored to be able to do it.

00:33:37

David Caspe: I've never understood the concept, like actors and people in Hollywood and stuff always get shit from certain people saying like, " Why should we listen to you just because you're an actor. Just because you can be in movies, that doesn't mean we have to listen to you." They've never understood the point that it's usually actors, they have access to such a huge platform. It's using their platform to get people to listen to other people, Don or an actor, usually, who comes out or Joaquin Phoenix, talking about animal rights and things like that. They're not coming out saying do this because I think it, if you like my movies, then you also have to-

00:34:11

Don Cheadle: Agree with my politics.

00:34:13

David Caspe: It's more just saying like, " Okay, this is how the word gets out. And these are people that are trying to get their word out." You pick the time when everybody's watching so that everybody's watching. It's not disrespecting that time. It's that, yeah, you do it when everyone's watching, you know what I'm saying? I don't know. That always just seems so stupid to me. George Clooney is not saying, " Because I know about acting, I know about this."

00:34:38

Jordan Cahan: It's just sharing the spotlight, there's a generosity to it.

00:34:41

Scott Talal: Yeah. Well, Brad would often say like " We can't get out of the light and they can't get in the light. We're just trying to take that beam and refract that light and put it on people who have been doing this work in the trenches way more than we have." We're just the lightning rod off.

We're all obviously at home, staying at home, trying to stay safe during this. Any final thoughts, any final words to the audience?

00:35:04

Speaker 3: Well, I would just like to say thank you to those that have tuned into the show and I hope that you're enjoying it. And hopefully we can be some kind of a respite during this time when we're all hopefully being responsible and hunkering down and staying a respectful social distance away from each other. We're going to come out of this. We're just grateful that people seem to be digging what's happening and we hope you continue to do so.

00:35:29

David Caspe: 100%. Thank you to all the people in danger right now that are working jobs so all of us can stay home.

00:35:35

Scott Talal: Any final thoughts, Jordan?

00:35:36

Jordan Cahan: I'm not going to put a better than Don just did. Talk about a beautiful sentence. I've been feeling it in my chest too. That heaviness, that gravity, that we're all feeling. I read an article about this, but they call it existential grief. That we're all just feeling this giant wave. All I hope is that we give you one or two laughs or even tougher, a gasp at a twist or something that our show can deliver. To me, that, if we can do that, I'd be thrilled and delighted.

00:36:08

David Caspe: And it is a comedy by the way, a lot of people for whatever reason, because it's called Black Monday and it has such high level actors who can also do drama along with comedy. I think the first instinct before people watch the show was like, " Oh, that must be a drama." It is, in fact, a comedy, there are a lot of jokes. And if you're looking for a laugh to, like Don said, take your mind off of the Hell we find ourselves in, watch Black Monday on Sunday.

00:36:32

Jordan Cahan: I was drinking the other night, and someone asked me to describe what making this show is like with my oldest friend or one of my oldest friends. And I said,

" It's kind of like we're robbing a 7/11." It feels just like I cannot believe they're letting us get away with the things that we can get away with, and doing it with Don. There is just a sense of joy and freedom to it. Even if we're giving people 1% of that, I'm really appreciative, too, that people are digging it in that way. So thanks everybody.

00:37:05

Scott Talal: And thanks to our guests today. After Don Cheadle, show runners Jordan Cahan and David Caspe from the Showtime series Black Monday. Gentlemen, stay well to our audience. Stay well, stay healthy, and join us again next time.

00:37:17

Don Cheadle: Appreciate it.

00:37:19

David Caspe: Stay safe, everybody.

00:37:19

Jordan Cahan: Take care, guys. Be safe.

00:37:20

Don Cheadle: Thank you.

00:37:26

Jenny Curtis: Hollywood Unscripted is created by Curtco media and presented in cooperation with the Malibu film society. This episode was hosted by Scott Talal with guests Don Cheadle, Jordan Cahan, and David Caspe. Produced and edited by Jenny Curtis, mastering by Michael Kennedy. The executive producer of Hollywood Unscripted is Stuart Halperin. The Hollywood Unscripted theme song is by Celleste and Eric Dick. Make sure to subscribe because throughout our off season, we will be bringing you more bonus episodes of Hollywood Unscripted: Stuck at Home. Stay safe and healthy. And thanks for listening.

00:38:08

Speaker 2: Curtco Media. Media for your mind.