

Jones Is **WANTED**

By Iris Wiener
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Rashida Jones doesn't normally watch cop shows, but she knows a good one when she sees one. "I really like *WANTED*, and I was really surprised at that," she says of the action-packed drama series on TNT. "I've been told that it's been testing well with women too, which makes me really happy!" It's safe to say that Jones can take some of the credit for drawing in a powerful female fan base. As Carla Merced, Jones is the only female member of a specialized team of law enforcement officers who track down Los Angeles' 100 most wanted criminals. "It's exciting, and very rare television. You don't get that that much anymore," she says of the show.

If anyone knows what makes good entertainment, it's Rashida Jones. A multi-talented entertainer, the artist is known as a classical pianist, a model, a singer/songwriter, an actress, and even as one of *People* magazine's "50 Most Beautiful" in 2002.

Born and raised in Bel-Air, Jones is the youngest daughter of musical icon Quincy Jones and actress Peggy Lipton (*Mod Squad*, *Twin Peaks*). She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in religion and philosophy from Harvard University. After graduation, she appeared in the CBS miniseries *Mario Puzo's The Last Don* with Danny Aiello, and the HBO TV movie *If These Walls Could Talk II*, and had a recurring role on *Freaks and Geeks*, among other credits. She then landed a series role on *Boston Public* (2000-2002).

On the big screen, Jones' credits include *Full Frontal*, *Little Black Book*, and *Death of a Dynasty*. She has additionally performed back-up vocals on Maroon 5's acclaimed debut album, *Songs about Jane*.

Jones recently sat down with the *The Record* to discuss the challenges and support that she encounters.

What was it about the *WANTED* script that first appealed to you?

I always like a tough lady, and I just really liked the way it was written. I liked the fact that the characters said a lot of things off the cuff. They didn't sit on jokes or ideas for too long. Everything moves really well on the show. And I liked that it addressed pretty serious, sensitive subject matters with relative ease in the sense that it made it feel like it was part of a day, as opposed to a big tragic event that stops everything.

How did you prepare yourself mentally and physically to take on the role of a cop?

The director of the pilot suggested that I



Photo Courtesy Patrick Ecclesine

Rashida Jones will star in *WANTED*, which will premier on TNT on December 5.

come around to me." This is something I love about Carla.

Did you face any challenges because you were a female working amidst a big group of men?

It's funny, because I don't consider myself a girly type of girl at all, but for some reason being around so many men makes me feel ultra feminine all of a sudden. I've always had all guy friends, I've never been uncomfortable around guys which is great because if for some reason I wasn't the way I was, this would be a really difficult situation for me. But the guys in the cast like to tease, and they like to point it out sometimes that I'm a girl (*Laughs*).

Who are some of your favorite tough gals currently living it up on the airwaves?

My favorite was Adriana on *The Sopranos*. She was sort of tough but really she was just a lover, really sensitive, wanted to be loved, wanted to love, but she was kind of forced into these tough situations. I absolutely love her, she's so good. Edie Falco, same thing. All of the women on that show are really incredible because they're put in these really subordinating positions, but in a way they manage to be stronger and more autonomous than the male characters. I love that. I like Mariska Hargitay, she's good, super tough, but absolutely beautiful.

What was it like to grow up with two famous parents, Quincy Jones and Peggy Lipton?

work out, not for appearance reasons, but just to feel strong. And he was totally right, I started running five miles a day, lifting weights, and it made me feel like I was more connected to the ground. It was good, especially since I was around a lot of dudes! And mentally it was definitely a challenge for me. I haven't had a part quite like this before. I've been a tough girl before, but this was different because I think that she's used to being tough in general, and she's had to be tough kind of her whole life. It's more of a subtle thing, it's not as much like, "Feel my presence, I'm here and I'm tough." It's more like, "I can feel you and your bullshit. I'm going to sit down over here and let you kind of just spiral out of control with your own male issues and when you're ready to come around, you'll

I don't know what it was like to grow up without them. I don't know, I guess it was great?

Why should we watch *WANTED*?

Because it is, in my opinion, unlike anything else that's on television right now. It very creatively marries the whole procedural drama and some really cool stylized original storytelling. And it's gritty. I have not been bored for one minute.

WANTED, which premiered in July, returns to TNT on Monday, December 5 with two new back-to-back episodes at 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. Three additional episodes will air December 12, 17, and 26 at 10 p.m.