

# The New Golden Age

Television today—in all of its forms—may be better than ever. From *The Sopranos* to *Fargo*, here are directors working on some of the seminal series since 2000.



**CHANGING TIMES:** (above) Director-executive producer Matthew Weiner directs Jon Hamm as troubled ad man Don Draper in AMC's *Mad Men* (2007-2015). Weiner created a sleek style and morally ambiguous world, a characteristic of many of the era's best shows; (opposite) For Jon Cassar, directing Fox's *24* (2001-2010) was "the love of my life as far as my career goes." The most difficult part was dealing with time constraints. "You just want to do so much. We were incredibly ambitious."



PHOTOS: (LEFT) CARIN BAER/AMC; (ABOVE) COURTESY JON CASSAR



**DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS:** Michelle MacLaren (center) blocks actors to fill the treacherous courtyard at the steps of Harrenhal castle for HBO's *Game of Thrones* (2011-present). She said she often shoots everything from one point of view, then redresses the set and repositions actors and props to achieve the epic quality of the series.

**SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE:** Agnieszka Holland (left) directs Mireille Enos in AMC's *The Killing* (2011-2014), inspired by a Danish crime series. Executive producer Veena Sud hired Holland for her cinematic vision. "She has a great eye," Sud said, "for how a scene serves the underlying themes and truths of the characters."



**QUARTERBACK:** Peter Berg (center) on the field directing plays for NBC's *Friday Night Lights* (2006-2011), a series about high school football shot in Austin, Texas. "For the authenticity of the show, it was critical for us to be in Texas," Berg said. "I don't think the show would have worked had we been up in Canada or on a soundstage in Los Angeles."



**TV DINNER:** John Patterson (right, standing) directs James Gandolfini, Tony Sirico, and Steve Schirripa in one of the many meal scenes in HBO's *The Sopranos* (1999-2007). Because of his attention to detail and precision framing, Patterson was nicknamed "the Dutch Master," even though he wasn't Dutch.





**THE WHOLE TRUTH:** The FX series *Fargo* (2014-present) employed the same visual flourishes as the 1996 Coen brothers' film of the same name. Shooting in Alberta, Canada, Randall Einhorn (left) used whiteout snow conditions to convey Minnesota's desolate, depressing, and remote sense of confinement.



**INSIDE THE BELTWAY:** For his first foray into television for Netflix's *House of Cards* (2013-present), David Fincher, directing Kevin Spacey and Kate Mara, said he was anxious to tell a long-form narrative that allowed him to explore characters and plots beyond the two-hour limitation of feature films.



**STREET SMART:** Ernest R. Dickerson (left) directs Dominic West and Domenick Lombardozzi in HBO's crime series *The Wire* (2002-2008), which explored a different part of Baltimore each season. To prepare, Dickerson would binge-watch all previous episodes to get a feel for how his episode fit into the tapestry.



**FAMILY PLOT:** Michael Spiller directs Jesse Tyler Ferguson (right) on ABC's *Modern Family* (2009-present). Because of the series' large cast, Spiller liked to spend time alone with the script drawing diagrams to imagine where to move people and the camera. "It starts to look like some bizarre football play," he said.



**ADVISE & CONSENT:** Christopher Misiano directs Jimmy Smits as he's about to become president in one of the final episodes of NBC's *The West Wing* (1999-2006). The White House set was one of the largest ever constructed for both a pilot and a series. Misiano, who won a DGA Award in 2004, directed 35 episodes.



**TUNING UP:** Paris Barclay (center) directs Cory Monteith and Mark Salling, part of an awkward collection of teenagers coming together to perform elaborate musical numbers at their high school, in Fox's *Glee* (2009-2015). Barclay described the show as "sort of *Fame* meets *Election* meets *High School Musical*."

PHOTOS: (TOP) CHRIS LARGE/FX; (BOTTOM, LEFT) PAUL SCHIRALDI; (BOTTOM, RIGHT) KAREN NEAL/ABC

PHOTOS: (TOP) MELINDA SUE GORDON/NETFLIX; (BOTTOM, LEFT) JUSTIN LUBIN/NBCU PHOTO BANK; (BOTTOM, RIGHT) COURTESY PARIS BARCLAY



**TROUBLE IN PARADISE:** Stephen Williams (center) directs Josh Holloway and Evangeline Lilly on location in Hawaii on ABC's *Lost* (2004-2010). Williams, who was with the series from the beginning, said "each episode has its own aesthetic, and you try to be true to those elements, but we endeavor to maintain a consistency of tone throughout the whole season."



**LESSON PLAN:** When director-executive producer Vince Gilligan (right) pitched the role of chemistry-teacher-turned-meth-dealer Walter White to Bryan Cranston in AMC's *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013), he told him he wanted the character to start off as a nerdy Mr. Chips type and transform into Scarface by the end of the series.



**CURRENT EVENTS:** For Showtime's CIA thriller *Homeland* (2011-present), Michael Cuesta, with Mandy Patinkin, used documentary-style camera techniques to motivate tension and realism: "It's totally immediate, you're right there with the character. Handheld is there to tell the story, not to turn it into an amusement park ride."



**BROOKLYN BRIDGE:** On HBO's *Girls* (2012-present), her first time directing for television, Lena Dunham wanted to make camera choices that were powerful without dictating the action. "I don't want my actors to have to do intense choreography," she said. "I just try to give emotional reasons for what's happening on screen."