

Michael Hyatt Talks Spiritual Journey & ‘Unexpected’ New Season of ‘Ray Donovan’ [EUR Exclusive]



Michael Hyatt

*With nearly 30 years in the business, actress [Michael Hyatt](#) has been a part of some of television’s most iconic series – from “The West Wing,” to “The Wire,” “True Detective,” and a hilarious role on the web series “Crazy Ex-Girlfriend.” Her recent turn on the silver screen was in “Night Crawler,” starring Jake Gyllenhaal. Hyatt currently stars as Detective Sheila Muncie on the award-winning Showtime drama series “[Ray Donovan](#),” and EUR/Electronic Urban Report chopped it up with the veteran performer about the upcoming fourth season, which premiere June 26.

For those not familiar with the series, tell us about your character on “Ray Donovan.”

Michael: She is a detective who's had her eye on this Donovan family for a while. Mainly Mickey Donovan because he's always up to something. When I was introduced to the script, there's something going on with sex trafficking and its presence in Los Angeles, and unfortunately, Mickey Donovan gets caught up in it. He starts dealing with people that are way bigger than him, and I know Mickey Donovan and the Donovan family enough to know that if I can get to Mickey, that will give me an "in" to the bigger picture to this terrible sex trafficking going on. So that is basis — the reason that I exist. So we go back and forth with me getting him and then Ray coming in and saving his family as he always does. So I get involved with Ray and all that is going on with him. I'm a detective and I'm after the bigger picture and by going after the bigger picture I get caught up in the Donovan family.

What type of creative energy do actors like Jon Voight and Liev Schreiber bring to the set?

Michael: I work more with Jon than Liev, and Jon is just an incredibly generous actor. Truly generous is what I can say about this man. He was very clear about wanting my input. Wanting to make sure I understood that this is a partnership. One of the great things about the journey I have had in this business, playing reoccurring guest spots on several different shows is, you pick up a vibe from a show. You have the opportunity to visit many different experiences and many different sets and you absorb the energy so that you know how to adjust yours to work with what already exists. And many times when you're a guest and you're stepping into an energy that is already flowing, there is not always the ability to embrace or to be embraced. But with Jon it was completely different. Jon is one of those actors who likes to dissect — he and Liev. Every nuance of a scene, of a line, is dissected to make sure that it honors the energy of the show and honors the commitment that

writers have made. It's not something that I'm accustomed to all the time. I come prepared to do my thing but very-very few times do you find the series regular actors coming to you as a guest and saying, "Let's work on this together." So when Jon came to me and said, "We're doing this together. I really want to know what you think." I was like, okay, let's do it! The freedom that it allows an actor is just beautiful. It immediately takes all the edge off and you are now in this with another person. There's nothing more beautiful than seeing or feeling that kind of collaborative energy when you're working on a piece.

What three adjectives would you use to describe this upcoming season of "Ray Donovan"?

Michael: Deep. Heavy. Unexpected.



You seem to be the go-to detective woman, so did you audition for the role or were you offered the part on "Ray Donovan"?

Michael: I audition for 90% of the things that I get, and what

happens a lot of the times lately is that I audition for one thing and that doesn't come through and then months down the line my manager gets a calls that says, "The people that you auditioned for-for that other role, that other role went south but they are asking you now to come back for this." I don't remember the audition for Ray Donovan. I think after the Night Crawler movie, it just sort of opened up a new energy. I think I was playing detectives before but once I got Night Crawler, just the whole consciousness was like, "Oh, yeah! Her for this! That makes sense." When you do some kind of like, big movie, or some large thing that's incredibly influential, it starts to turn people's consciousness to how they can see you, and how they can perceive you in a particular role. I am sure that I auditioned for it. I'd rather say I did than I didn't, but either way, I'm grateful to have the job.



You said in an interview that you “consider art, at its best, to be a spiritual experience.” Is there a particular role that has truly been a spiritual awakening for you?

Michael: Not one in particular but I can tell you that there is a thing that happens that I have experienced a few times on different shows like *The Wire*. There's no one show that has done it all. I can remember a scene that I was working on on *The Wire* that quickly became bigger than me. It felt like I was a fly on the wall watching me have this experience. It felt like an out-of-body experience because I was not controlling what was going on. It became something that was coming out of me and I was almost an observer of the experience. It has happened on stage several times. You work on something and then you let it go and then something else takes over, and when that something else takes over, it just becomes like this huge vibration around you, and when that happens, I know I'm in the right place. Sometimes it doesn't have to be this big major thing. Sometimes you can just feel a switch turn on, and the moment I feel that switch, that's when I don't have to do anything and it's such a great feeling. I feel so proud and it is not about me, and that's what is important for me to try to convey. When that switch is turned on, I know that something is working through me. When I can get to that point I feel so grateful because now I'm doing my work. I am being that vessel, and I take no credit for it except that I am so grateful that I allowed it to happen.

You've been on some amazing series, ("Hello Ladies," "Dexter," "True Detective," "Law & Order"), what do you attribute to being blessed with such a stellar resume? How much of it is luck and being connected with the right people in Hollywood?

Michael: None of it is about luck and connections. I'm not the kind of person that knows anybody. It's just not my energy. I don't mix and mingle very much, it's just not my flow. I have busted my ass for every gig that I have gotten. Up until about three years ago, I've auditioned for everything I've gotten. Now granted, because I've been here for a while, the majority of casting directors know my work, and so I don't have to do a

cattle call but beyond that, I show up, I prepare and I come in the room sometimes nervous as shit, sometimes, "Okay, I got this," and I feel confident. There have been times when because of the work I've done, my manager gets a call that, "We already know her. We like her. Can she do this?" A majority of the stuff that I get is from pounding the pavement like so many of us do to get the work that we get. I don't even know what that looks like to be the "In-crowd," or the A-list. I'm sure it's lovely but the work I get I busted my ass for.

Technology is shifting and shaping the way viewers receive content, and I know you're venturing off into the world of web bases series, so are you finding that technology is influencing the type of work your accept?

Michael: Work is work for me. If the story has power, and the character that I'm being asked to portray is a powerful energy, the medium is not important because there is an audience and my desire is to have an audience so that I can tell a story and pass the truth of the moment on to the person that is to receive it. The medium doesn't matter to me, cause wherever you go, there is an audience. As long as there is a strong story and an audience to receive it, it's the work that I focus on. It's the message that has to be passed through. That is what matters.

When you're offered roles at the same time, what are the factors that help you decide which character to take on?

Michael: See, that's the spiritual journey. It ain't got nothing to do with me. You put all your cards on the table, you put all of your eggs in the basket, you go full-out for whatever and once the table starts spinning, whichever one is left on the table is the one that you do. That has been my experience. I just had this experience a few months ago when there were four different projects that were screaming my name, and my ego head is spinning like sh*t. These were all great projects. And I'm running

from this place to that place, to test for this project and test for that project, and audition for this. After a while it became laughable because it's like, who are you going to choose? All you do is show up and give your best, and whichever one is supposed to happen is the one that's going to happen. You just have to let go and trust that you are being guided, because that is the truth. So wherever it is I'm guided, let go of the head and trust where you're being taken because that is exactly where you are supposed to be to get what needs to get done.

In an alternate universe, one in which you are not an actor, what would you be doing?

Michael: That's so easy. Okay, pretend that I've raised my son and he's fine and in his own world. I would be in an ashram somewhere mediating and learning and teaching as much as I can about consciousness.