

coverstory

BY GEORGE DICKIE



Selena Gomez, Martin Short and Steve Martin (from left) star in "Only Murders in the Building," which begins streaming Tuesday on Hulu.

True crime buffs probe 'Only Murders in the Building' in Hulu comedy mystery

A podcast and a resolve to investigate "Only Murders in the Building" bring together an unlikely mix of New York apartment dwellers in a so-named comedic murder mystery series upcoming on Hulu.

In the eight-episode series that begins streaming Tuesday, Aug. 31, a grisly murder in the Arconia, an exclusive Upper West Side apartment building, brings together three strangers: Charles Hayden Savage (Steve Martin), a veteran actor whose claim to fame is for playing a TV detective decades ago; Oliver (Martin Short), a New York stage director with major money problems; and Mabel (Selena Gomez), a mysterious young woman with a link to the victim and no apparent means that would enable her to reside at the pricey address.

All are true-crime aficionados and fans of the podcast "All Is Not OK in Oklahoma." Soon, the oddly matched trio resolve to probe the slaying and start a podcast "Only Murders in the Building" to document their investigation.

The series was created by Martin and John Hoffman ("Grace & Frankie," "Looking") with Short and Gomez also getting executive producer credits here.

"I'm actually a true crime — 'fan' is the wrong word, but I'm interested in it," Martin explains. "I'm interested in the solving of crime. I really like that. And so I had this idea ... This is one of the most unusual things I've ever done because it actually has a plot. I usually don't do things with plots."

With a long partnership dating back to "Three Amigos!" in the mid-80s, "Only Murders in the Building" represents yet another effort from Martin and Short. The addition of Gomez, best known for her stint as Alex in Disney Channel's "Wizards of Waverly Place," to the pair of septuagenarians may seem an odd match, but Short reports that the 29-year-old actress fit right in.

"What I love about the end product of the show," Short says, "is the three different energies of the actors. I kind of play it very real. Steve goes way over the top. And Selena grounds everything in this kind of dry, hilarious delivery. And the combination, I think, is perfect. And it was a dream to work with this brilliant, young lady."

For her part, Gomez was understandably apprehensive to be working with two comedy legends but those nerves vanished quickly.

"I didn't know what to expect because sometimes I find that comedy people can sometimes be a little bit distant and so I didn't know what I was getting myself into," she explains. "And now I have like these two crazy uncles in my life that basically give me boy advice and I sing rap songs to them."

"Naughty rap songs, I have to add," Martin quips.

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