

Urban cowboy

There's a new sheriff in town in 'Deputy'

By Francis Babin
TV Media

After weeks of looking back at the year's best movies, television shows and all things entertainment, it's time to look at what 2020 will bring us. Once again, superheroes and comic book adaptations are poised to dominate the big and small screen alike. This is nothing new, of course — we are currently living in a superhero world and have been for well over a decade, but that has not always been the case. There was a period not long ago when the majority of these kinds of movies and shows were neither remarkable nor very successful.

Long before our favorite Marvel and DC friends dominated Hollywood, it was the western that ruled the world. From the advent of the moving picture to the 1960s, the western was without a doubt the most popular genre before it slowly started to fade away. There were some memorable westerns released in the intervening decades, but they were few and far between.

However, the western genre is resilient and tough like its cowboy protagonists, so it never truly went away. Over the years, the elements that made the genre so popular have been incorporated into other genres. From the cult-classic series "Firefly" and the critically acclaimed blockbuster "Logan" (2017) to FX's "Justified" and Disney's "The Mandalorian," the western is still going strong, just in a more subtle way than before. On Thursday, Jan. 2, travel to Los Angeles as the Old West meets the big city in the premiere of the modern-day western "Deputy," on Fox.

After years of obscurity following a fruitful early career, Stephen Dorff bounced back in a big way in 2019 with his leading performance opposite Academy Award winner Mahershala Ali ("Green Book," 2018) in the

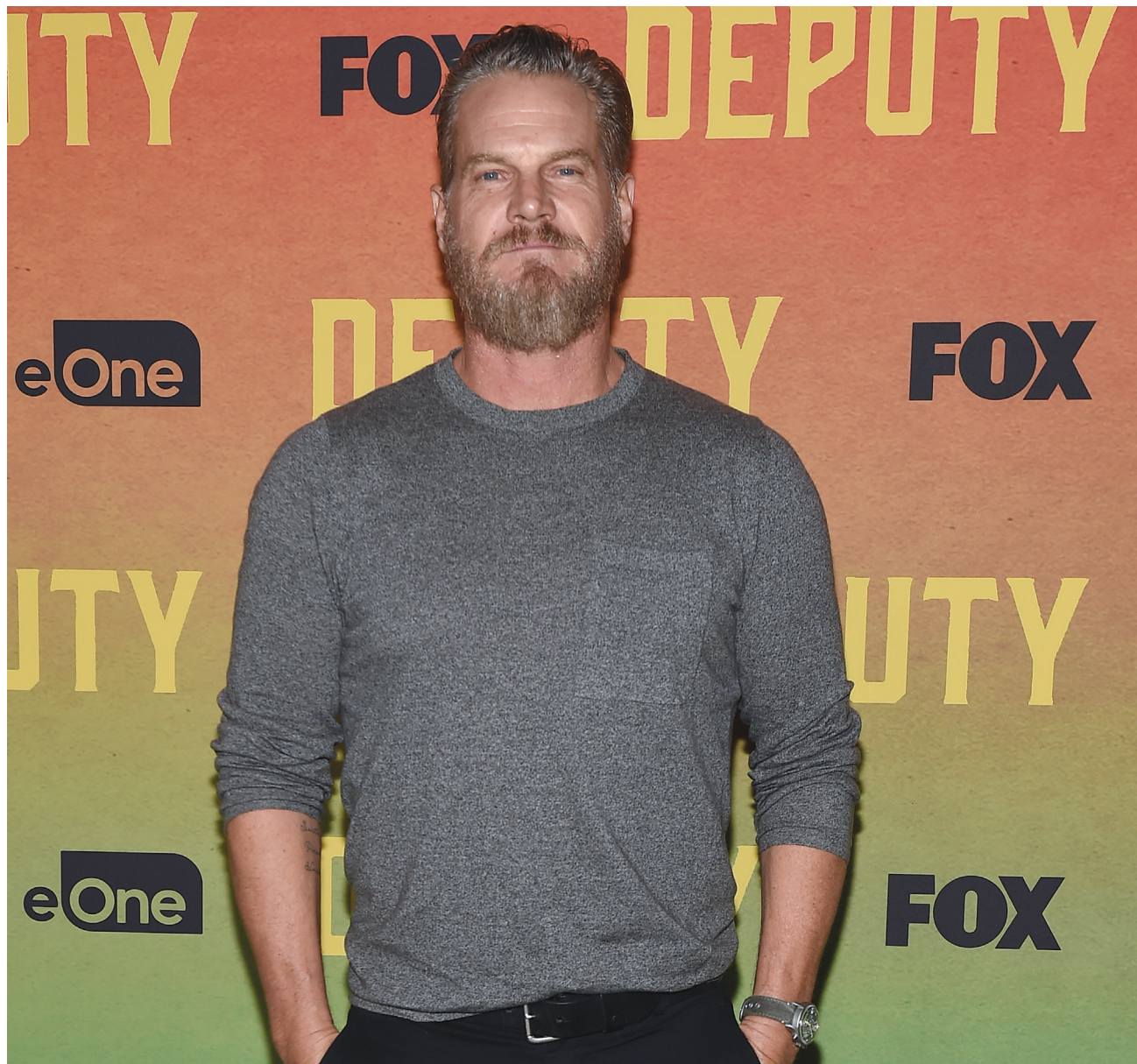
well-received third season of the HBO anthology "True Detective." Now, Dorff dons a badge and gun for a second year in a row to portray Bill Hollister in "Deputy," a gruff, fifth-generation lawman who must come to terms with his new position as the Los Angeles County Sheriff after his predecessor dies unexpectedly.

If that sounds like a generic procedural, you're not wrong. But there is definitely more to this story. In this gritty, modern-day western, Deputy Bill Hollister is not at all an ambitious man, and he certainly has no aspirations of climbing the ladder at work. He is a career lawman who is very comfortable kicking down doors and taking down bad guys but is utterly lost in a staff meeting or navigating the sea of politics.

How, then, does Hollister end up in the coveted position of the Los Angeles County Sheriff in this western tale? Pure chance. The deputy who does not play by the rules ends up as the top cop, thanks to an arcane rule written way back in the days of the Wild West. If that sounds like an outrageous premise, again, you are not wrong, but just think about how many wildly out-of-date laws are still on the books because the time was never taken to repeal them. In short, becoming sheriff by chance is unlikely but not implausible. And it's very entertaining.

We have all been in a situation where we did not feel comfortable or felt like an imposter. We have all found ourselves in a situation where we did not feel at ease or in control, but most of us were not thrust into the high-stakes world of law enforcement where lives are constantly on the line. How will the newly appointed sheriff fare in this brave new world of politics and red tape? Only time will tell.

Beyond having to deal with the countless new responsibilities, the new sheriff in town has



Brian Van Holt costars in "Deputy"

to learn how to lead and be part of a team, a prospect that is assuredly not appealing to the lawman. Luckily for our protagonist, his new colleagues all share his passion, devotion and dedication for law and justice.

Joining Hollister will be Deputy Cade Walker (Brian Van Holt, "Cougar Town"), a tough as nails former Marine who served in Afghanistan and one of the few that our sheriff can truly

trust. Accompanying the pair will be Joseph Blair (Shane Paul McGhie, "What Men Want," 2019), a bright-eyed go-getter and son of Hollister's old partner.

Rounding out the crew is Breanna Bishop (Bex Taylor-Klaus, "13 Reasons Why"), a young, eager and sarcastic driver who is in charge of Bill's security detail, and Genevieve (Karrueche Tran, "Claws"), a quick-witted deputy who is always keeping

things light with her fun loving attitude.

Acting as the thorn in the sheriff's side will be Jerry London (Mark Moses, "Desperate Housewives"), the typical overbearing bureaucrat who is not at all in favor of Hollister and is looking for any reason to rid him from the force. Standing by Hollister's side through it all is Dr. Paula Reyes (Yara Martinez, "Jane the Virgin"), a trauma surgeon and Bill's

supportive and strong-willed wife, who perfectly balances out her husband's intensity.

Uncomfortable with his new position and unsure of his new responsibilities, newly appointed Los Angeles County Sheriff Bill Hollister will need to rely on his new team and instincts in order to succeed in the modern-day Old West. Catch the action with the premiere of "Deputy" Thursday, Jan. 2, on Fox.