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BILLBOARD MUSIC AWARD:
PREDICTIONS

Emmy spotlight: Irina Dubova is outstanding in major acting debut on Tuesday's 'The Americans'



Riley Chow • Emmys • May 16, 2017 7:45 am

Patrick Harbron (FX)



Tuesday's "The Americans" is not to be missed. "Dyatkovo" is the best episode of the fifth and penultimate season, largely due to an Emmy-worthy guest turn by Irina Dubova — an accountant by trade, making her major American on-screen debut.

"Dyatkovo" is a spiritual successor to 2015's "Do Mail Robots Dream of Electric Sheep?" That landmark episode yielded "The Americans" its first Emmy nomination outside of the Creative Arts races: Best Drama Writing, credited to consulting producer Joshua Brand, who also writes "Dyatkovo." A television veteran, Brand is a three-time Emmy winner, having prevailed in the 1987 Best Miniseries race for "A Year in the Life" and twice in 1992: Best Drama Series for "Northern Exposure" and Best Movie/Mini Writing for "I'll Fly Away." Co-creator of those three, Brand's longest-running creation was the iconic "St. Elsewhere," for which he earned his first of 14 Emmy nominations to date: Best Drama Series in 1983. Soon after a 17-year hiatus from television, Brand joined "The Americans" in its first season; "Dyatkovo" is his 12th script for the show.

In "Dyatkovo," KGB handler Claudia (Margo Martindale) tasks Elizabeth and her husband Philip (Matthew Rhys) with confirming that a Massachusetts woman named Natalie Granholm (Dubova) was a Second World War Nazi who personally executed hundreds of prisoners in Dyotkovo, Russia. When Philip and Elizabeth confront her in the last third of the episode, it becomes clear why Brand was ideal for this script. Natalie's true identity becomes secondary to revealing character-based decisions and the show's thesis that such a job in espionage increasingly wears on the soul. Brand again "compresses the season's

themes into a single heartbreaking exchange” ([IndieWire review by Sam Adams](#)), defining what made “The Americans” television’s most critically acclaimed continuing drama for its last two seasons.

With Elizabeth characteristically stone-faced and Philip having reached the point in his emotionally taxing career that he precedes most lines with a heavy sigh, it is on Dubova as Natalie to sell the heartbreak of the climactic exchange. Performing opposite a pair of Emmy nominees is intimidating enough, but Dubova’s achievement is all the more surprising in light of her limited experience. She pragmatically turned to accounting after immigrating to the United States from Russia and now has a decade of work experience in that field. In the last few years, she has begun to realize her original dream of an acting career, appearing in various shorts and unreleased indies. But for consumers of American television and theatrical releases, “The Americans” marks Dubova’s on-screen debut.

A long scene of Natalie pleading to the supposed heroes of the show makes for uncomfortable viewing, but an exercise that actors relish. Directed by Oscar nominee **Steph Green** (Best Live Action Short for “New Boy,” 2008), Dubova is outstanding, deliberately shifting her precious responses as the Jennings assess Natalie. This breakthrough performance is the stuff of a surprise Emmy winner who triumphs fairly through the strength of her submitted episode.

It is regrettable that [FX did not submit Dubova](#) for Emmy consideration in Best Drama Guest Actress, although it is admittedly a wise move strategically, so [FX](#) can focus on campaigning [Alison Wright](#). She should have been nominated for Best Drama *Supporting Actress* last year ([and was by Gold Derby](#)) as the naively traitorous Martha Hanson and is back on “The Americans” with “special guest star” billing now. Irina Dubova will next appear in [Bill Hader](#)’s upcoming HBO comedy series “Barry.”

[Margo Martindale jumps to supporting Emmy race for ‘The Americans’](#)

Early in “Dyatkov,” FBI Agent Stan Beeman (played by [Noah Emmerich](#)) remarks offhandedly that his office’s mail-delivering machine is “more trouble than it’s worth,” a darkly humorous callback for fans to Brand’s Emmy-nominated episode, in which KGB spy Elizabeth Jennings ([Keri Russell](#)) plants a listening device on the mail robot after murdering a kindly old bookkeeper in the wrong place at the wrong time. Guest star [Lois Smith](#)’s “instantly empathetic portrayal” ([IndieWire, 2015](#)) of bookkeeper Betty’s final moments was so moving that Gold Derby’s users [nominated her for Best Drama Guest Actress](#); the Emmys unfortunately snubbed the two-time Tony nominee.

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Who will win 'Dancing with the Stars'?

NOMINEE

Total Votes Total Odds



1 Normani Kordei

78

1/3



2 Rashad Jennings

19

9/2



3 David Ross

6

16/1

TV 12 mins ago

'Dancing with the Stars' Mirror Ball predictions: Normani Kordei is heavy favorite to win at the home stretch

By [Daniel Montgomery](#)

We're at the home stretch of "Dancing with the Stars" season 24. In less than 48 hours the Mirror Ball Trophy will be awarded to singer Normani Kordei, football player Rashad Jennings or baseball...



TV 42 mins ago

Felicity Huffman ('American Crime') on giving voice to people in the margins [EXCLUSIVE VIDEO]

By [Rob Licuria](#)

"Sometimes you wake up after 30 or 40 years and say 'there's no me in the world'," reveals Felicity Huffman during our recent webcam chat (watch the exclusive video above) about her character on...



TV May 20, 2017 7:28 pm

‘Doctor Who’ recap: The Doctor’s moral courage is tested in the mind-bending, heart-rending ‘Extremis’

By [Daniel Montgomery](#)

Whoever said, “There is nothing new under the sun,” never read a Steven Moffat script — actually that line is from the Old Testament, which is uniquely relevant to this week’s Biblical episode of...



TV May 20, 2017 4:00 pm

'The Voice' Top 4: What was the best performance by Lauren Duski this season?

By [Paul Sheehan](#)

Lauren Duski made it to the final of "The Voice" based on her eight performances to date. She is coached by Blake Shelton, who has won five of his 11 seasons on the show. As per her NBC bio: "At a..."



Felicity Huffman ('American Crime') on giving voice to people in the margins [EXCLUSIVE VIDEO]



'Twin Peaks' revival recap: 6 most mind-bending moments from series premiere



'Veep' episode 6 recap: Selina mixes illicit trade deals and pleasure in 'Qatar'

Epix Emmy FYC mailer: Full



seasons of 'Berlin Station' & 'Graves' shipped to TV academy...



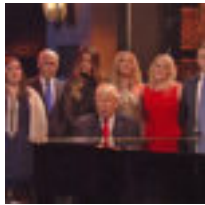
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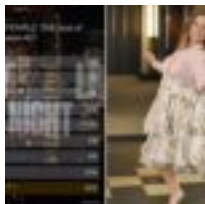
Marvel's 'Venom': Oscar nominee Tom Hardy cast as comic-book antihero



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Melissa McCarthy is best female 'Saturday Night Live' host of Season 42, say 36% of readers



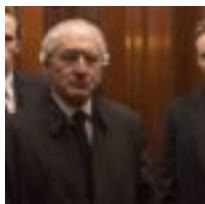
Kevin Bacon ('I Love Dick') chats exploring 'the nature of celebrity' in new comedy series [EXCLUSIVE...]



WGN America Emmy FYC
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'Outsiders' & 'Underground' were
shipped to TV academy...



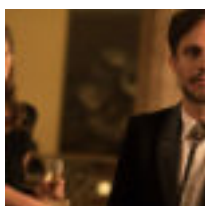
Jennifer Hudson ('Hairspray
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Roman Coppola ('Mozart in the
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