

# 2 TULSA KING

Sundays beginning July 14 on CBS  
**NEW SERIES!**

Dwight Manfredi is the toughest man in any room. He's also usually the smartest.

Sylvester Stallone easily swaggers into character as this stone-cold killer, who's also a philosophizing mobster holding tight to his own code of ethics, in *Tulsa King*.

While at the top of his game, Dwight takes the fall for someone else and ends up serving a 25-year stretch in prison. Upon release, he looks to return to that familiar life but the mob exiles him to Oklahoma, where he embarks on establishing a new criminal enterprise.

It's impossible to imagine any other actor in the role. Creator Taylor Sheridan is a veteran of putting movie stars at the center of his series (think Kevin Costner in *Yellowstone*, Harrison Ford in *1923*), and when he wrote this, he had Stallone in mind. How could he not? Stallone, turning 78 this month, embodies old-school gangster. When Dwight (aka The General) strides into a room, in his exquisitely tailored suit, he commands respect.

CBS airs the first season of the Paramount+ series this summer, with the streaming network airing Season 2 later this fall. During a break from shooting the second season in Atlanta, Stallone chats from his trailer.



(front row) Martin Starr,  
Jay Will and Dashiell Cornery

## What excites you about having a larger audience for *Tulsa King*, with CBS now airing it?

**Sylvester Stallone:** Well, it was an experiment the first year, but the character, which is quite different than your usual gangster, seems to have caught on. At first, people were not aware that this show was even in existence. Being on CBS would only benefit the second season.

## Some may dismiss Dwight as a well-dressed brute, but he's very intelligent. What do you think of his philosophical bent?

Yeah, in this season, he's quoting Oscar Wilde. Why is he always quoting people? Because he spent 25 years in prison reading Marcus Aurelius and things like that. It's interesting. He's an evolved thinker, yet he can't break out of this gangster mode.

## Are you writing this season?

I don't write for other actors. I wrote the scenes I'm in. Every word you see coming out of my mouth is pretty much my philosophy.

## Your daughter Scarlet plays Spencer on *Tulsa King*. What's it like working with her?

At first, I was nervous, trying to give her all the tricks that's taken me decades to learn. But I found she's got presence, something you can't manufacture. I'd like to say it's from me, but actually her mother has unbelievable presence. Oh my God, but she just pops! I didn't want her to be an actress. But I think it's sort of in our blood and she's now written a screenplay, which is astounding. I will read it this weekend.

## You've played the tough guy forever, but what scares you?

My wife. And my daughters; they're fearless around me. They're not intimidated.

## What do you consider your biggest successes professionally and personally?

Well, *Rocky*, of course, because that was out of the blue. I thought I was just making a film for drive-ins, the second bill. So, it's all been a bonus for me. *First Blood* was a great character, too; Rocky's the ultimate optimist, and Rambo's the ultimate pessimist. They're pretty close to different aspects of my personality. It's really wonderful to play something that just comes naturally to you. If someone said, "I want you to play Hamlet," I don't think so.

## What props do you have from your movies that you cherish?

I don't hold on to too much; it's like you're stuck in the past a little bit. As my wife goes, "Enough of this ego massage. You don't need this anymore." From *Rocky*, I keep the boxing gloves, the robe, the hat. *Rambo*, primarily the knife. The one thing from *The Expendables* are my pistols, which are very unique.



Sylvester  
Stallone**When were you starstruck?**

I would say Paul Newman. I met him in an elevator in 1968. I just happened to be in a hotel, and I don't know even know what I was doing at the Fontainebleau. He got in and I'm like, "Wow, that was interesting." Muhammad Ali, I met him in person. But I'd never gone up to anyone, ever asked for an autograph. I was kind of shy about that. I'm always amazed at how some people, they're just pretty bold and they go for it.

I also have to say, Telly Savalas. It was one of my first parts, on *Kojak*, and I had like a two-and-a-half-page monologue at the very end. We were shooting at probably 1 o'clock in the morning, and Telly wanted to go home, no question about it. So, I started my monologue. And he goes, 'Hey, you're a bad cop — end of story.' And he walked away. And that was the end of the show.

Hey, what about my moment, my two-and-a-half-page monologue? Wow, that's star power.

**What jobs did you have before making it in show business that influence you?**

Where I really formed an outlook, believe it or not, was being an usher. Because when you're an usher, you are literally not a human being. These people look at you and dismiss you, that's incredibly rude. But there is no better film class in the world than watching the same film 30, 40, 50 times.

**How many times have you watched *Rocky* (AMC is running a marathon of the films on July 4)?**

Probably 50. — *Jacqueline Cutler*