



# GODFATHER OF HARLEM

**PREMIERES**

Sunday, Sept. 29, 10/9c, Epix (timeslot premiere: Sunday, Oct. 6, 9/8c)

It's 1963. "Heat Wave" by Martha and the Vandellas is a hit. The Civil Rights Movement is exploding. And notorious Harlem crime boss and community hero Bumpy Johnson (Oscar winner Forest Whitaker, above left, with Rony Clanton)—a real-life figure—is released after 10 years in Alcatraz. In Epix's impeccably cast 10-episode drama *Godfather of Harlem*, Bumpy gets straight back to business, leaving a welcome-home party thrown by savvy wife Mayme (Ilfenesh Hadera, *Billions*) in their glamorous penthouse to begin reclaiming his crime territory from the Genovese mob family.

"Bumpy's bodyguard told me he was a unique type of gangster, somebody willing to get his hands dirty. He would get out of his car and engage in an actual gun battle," says Whitaker, who visited Johnson's former heavy in a nursing home as part of his exhaustive research. (Johnson himself died in 1968.) "He was ruthless—he killed people—but also sensitive, especially with his [drug addict] daughter."

Bumpy allies with an old friend, convicted criminal turned preacher Malcolm X (Nigél Thatch, also *Selma*'s Malcolm X), who thinks driving out Mafioso Vincent "Chin" Gigante (Vincent D'Onofrio) could help the community. (Chazz Palminteri and Paul Sorvino also play mobsters.) And the battle is on. —Kate Hahn

# EVIL

**PREMIERES**

Thursday, Sept. 26, 10/9c, CBS

A disagreement between *The Good Fight* creators Robert and Michelle King about why people do wicked things—she points to psychology, he suspects a supernatural element—birthed their latest CBS drama, the dark thriller *Evil*. "The show is very much about the tension between trying to explain evil religiously versus scientifically," she says.

*Evil*'s leading characters exemplify the profound split. According to Robert, psychologist Kristen Bouchard (Katja Herbers, *Westworld*) "believes there is a [diagnosable] reason for any murderous intent," while David Acosta (*Luke Cage*'s Mike Colter, below, with Herbers), an adventurer training to become a priest, argues for "something beyond that." In a nutshell, he's Mulder, she's Scully. A cash-strapped Kristen agrees to work with him and eager debunker Ben Shakir (*Blue Bloods*' Aasif Mandvi) to assess the Catholic Church's backlog of unexplained mysteries, which range from seeming miracles to hauntings.

First up: Kristen visits with a serial killer who exhibits signs of demonic possession—an encounter that generates some terrifyingly vivid nightmares for her. The case also introduces *Lost*'s Michael Emerson as übercreepy Leland Townsend, "who encourages people through social media to do great wrong and great evil," says Robert. The why of that is, of course, up for debate. —Ileane Rudolph

