

5 Things You Must Know About ‘Empire’

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Empire is TV’s latest hip-hopera and is already making history!

Lee Daniels and Danny Strong have yet to disappoint viewers, considering the show has moved up in ratings each week since it premiered. This makes *Empire* the first show to do so since *Grey’s Anatomy* in 2005.

Since our eyes are glued to the TV every Wednesday night, following the Lyon family’s empire and their drama, there are some things you must know — behind-the-scenes — about the show before continuing to watch.

Terrence Howard Wasn’t Supposed To Be Lucious

Could you see anyone but Terrence Howard playing Lucious Lyon? Co-creator, Lee Daniels, originally had Wesley Snipes in mind for the role of Lucious, but Cookie (Taraji P. Henson) wasn’t having it. She insisted to only do this role with Terrence by her side because that’s the only leading man she envisioned herself with. As Taraji told TIME Magazine, “If it couldn’t be Terrence Howard, I didn’t want to do it.”

More and More People Watch Each Week!

According to E! News, the pilot episode received a total of 9.8 million views, following the next week with 10.3 million, week three brought in 10.9 million, and 11.3 million people watched the latest episode (episode 4) on Wednesday — no other show has done this in 10 years!

Scandal is a FAN of Empire — Olivia and Cookie Unite!

The creator of “Thank God It’s Thursday” trio, *Scandal*, *How To Get Away With Murder* and *Grey’s Anatomy*, Shonda Rhimes, is a fan of *Empire*! “So now I am all about Empire. ALL ABOUT #EMPIRE, tweeples,” she tweeted the night it premiered. “I mean did you see @TherealTaraji stomp out of that prison like it was a runway? #EmpireFOX On TOP of giving an amazing performance?! #fan.”

One of the Castmates Was Almost Homeless Before the Show

Bryshere Gray, who plays the youngest son, Hakeem, revealed to E! News that he was broke and on the road to eviction before snatching the *Empire* gig.

This ultimately changed his life.

“I’m from West Philadelphia. Before I got the *Empire* gig, I was broke and I was about to get evicted and I got this job and I got this audition with Terrence and Taraji at the same time and it changed my life.”

Empire Touches Home For Lee Daniels

Remember the heartbreaking scene in the first episode when Lucious threw his son, Jamal, in the trashcan for wearing his mother’s heels?

That happened to Daniels when he five years old.

“When I was 5, my earliest memory was walking down the stairs in my mother’s red high heel shoes, and my dad — he’s a cop — is down playing cards with the boys and it was not pretty — at all,” Daniels told **OSU** students in February of 2014.

“He put me in a trash can and he said that I would never be nothing. He said, ‘You already have it bad, boy, cause you’re Black — now you’re a faggot too.’”

To find out more little known facts about *Empire*, visit **E! News**.