

# GABRIELLE BYNDLOSS

PRESS KIT





# BIOGRAPHY

Gabrielle Byndloss was born in Concord, CA, but grew up a Georgia girl. She was involved in competition cheer growing up until she realized she only enjoyed cheer for the performance aspect. From that point forward, Gabrielle focused all her attention on acting/theater and went to get her BA in Theatre from Georgia College & State University.

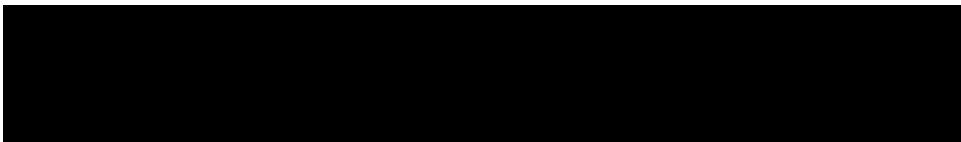
One of Gabrielle's first experiences on a film set was **"CATCH FIRE"** in 2015, where she guest starred in two episodes. This was very memorable not only because it was one of her first jobs, but seeing everything come together on and off camera further solidified her passion for acting. Gabrielle's other TV credits include **"DOOM CONTROL," "THE PASSAGE," "DYNASTY,"** and **"THE OUTSIDER,"** based on best-selling Stephen King novel and directed by Jason Bateman. This was not Gabrielle's first experience working with Jason as she can be seen in Season 1 of "Ozark." Gabrielle worked closely with Jason on set and was grateful to be learning from one of the best.

Most recently, Gabrielle played 'Olivia Walker,' John Walker's wife, in Marvel's newest phenomenon series, **"THE FALCON & THE WINTER SOLDIER,"** that premiered March 2021 exclusively on Disney+. Olivia Walker is John Walker's comforting strength, who is able to stay grounded when John feels like everything around him is moving.

Being multi-racial, Gabrielle is very passionate about young black women and mental health awareness. She also has a passion for animals, is a certified yoga teacher (practicing meditation and yoga) and also loves fashion. She currently resides in Atlanta, GA.







# DEADLINE

HOME / TV / BREAKING NEWS

## 'Long Slow Exhale': Lyriq Bent, Shalini Bathina, Ian Harding Among 13 Cast In Basketball Drama Series At Spectrum Originals

**EXCLUSIVE:** **Lyriq Bent** (*She's Gotta Have It*), **Shalini Bathina** (*Little Voice*) and **Ian Harding** (*Pretty Little Liars*), in a recasting, are set as leads opposite Rose Rollins and Josh Lucas in *Long Slow Exhale*, Spectrum Originals' upcoming drama series from L.A. *Finest's* Pam Veasey, Anton Cropper and John Dove and Paramount TV Studios.

Also joining the cast as series regulars are newcomer **Enajite Esegine**, **Brittney Elena**, **Jazmine Stewart**, **Isabella Star LaBlanc**, **Carmen Flood** (*Brews Brothers*) and **Erin Croom** (*The Conners*). **Samantha Bartow** (*Flagged, Hollywood*), **Brent Sexton**, **Tony Gonzalez** and **Gabrielle Byndloss** (*Falcon and the Winter Soldier*) will recur. After a nine-month exclusive run on Spectrum, the series will air with a second window on BET.

Created by Veasey and to be directed by Cropper, *Long Slow Exhale* follows J.C. Abernathy (Rollins), the successful head coach of a competitive women's college basketball team who finds herself in the middle of a potentially career shattering sexual abuse scandal. Sorting through the secrets to unravel the truth, she is forced to make decisions that will affect her, her family and the young female athletes who depend on her.



(L-R) Enajite Esegine, Carmen Flood, Erin Croom and Gabrielle Byndloss

Byndloss is recurring on Disney+'s *Falcon and the Winter Soldier* and HBO's *The Outsiders*. Other TV credits include *Doom Control*, *The Passage* and *Dynasty*. She's repped by Zero Gravity Management and Atlanta Models & Talent Agency.



# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

## Atlanta actress Gabrielle Byndloss enters Marvel Cinematic Universe with small role



Credit: DISNEY+

The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is expansive and involves plenty of big names in lights: Tony Stark. Black Panther. Thor. Black Widow.

But every film or TV series needs secondary and support characters, golden opportunities for up-and-coming actors to build their resumés. Atlanta actress Gabrielle Byndloss was fortunate enough to nab a supporting role in "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier," the second Atlanta-produced Disney+ TV offering after the well-received "WandaVision."

Byndloss plays Olivia Walker, the supportive wife of John Walker, a man selected to fill the shoes of Steve Rogers' dead Captain America as the "new" Captain America. "The Cap Is Back!" one poster proclaims. John Walker is played by Wyatt Russell, last seen as a California slacker type in AMC's "Lodge 49," also shot in Atlanta. Now, he's a decorated soldier selected to be America's latest "hero" who wants to make people feel safe.

Olivia shows up early in episode two in the locker room of his high school and provides John a few kind words as he deals with his own nervousness before seeing his old classmates. She is later seen cheering him on in the stands while "Good Morning America" interviews him.

Her character doesn't show up in episode three, and she can't say if or how she will appear in the final five episodes.

Byndloss, who graduated Harrison High School in Kennesaw and Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, said she came into the audition only knowing it was related to the Marvel universe in some way, and she would play a “wife.” She had no clue what show or who she would be married to. She didn’t know how many episodes she would be in. What she read during the audition was not related to “The Falcon and The Winter Soldier.”

This is standard Marvel secrecy. She said she even ghosted her family during auditions just to be safe. Once she did get the role, she had to sign non-disclosure agreements galore and only told her fiancé what the job was. Otherwise, she stayed mum until the show debuted last month. “This was my biggest role to date,” she said. “I was very scared.”

Byndloss recalled she skipped an out-of-town wedding to shoot the series, and her fiancé gleefully had to be super mysterious about her sudden absence.

Even on set, she said she was only given scenes she was connected with. She had to talk to others around her to piece together what the Falcon (Sam Wilson as played by Anthony Mackie) or the Winter Soldier (Bucky Barnes as played by Sebastian Sam) might be doing.

In a weird sense, she said the lack of information allowed her to be in the moment with her character, that she only cared about her husband and nothing else in the MCU.

She only crossed paths with Mackie by happenstance when she was trying to pull open a door at the same time as Mackie on the other side. She said he introduced himself and was super friendly to her.

Byndloss is the type of actor who would have been forced to move to Los Angeles a decade ago to get enough work. But she was able to stay in Atlanta the past few years and book jobs on shows such as “The Vampire Diaries,” “Halt and Catch Fire,” “Good Girls” and “Ozark.” Sometimes, her roles were so modest, she didn’t even get a name e.g. “female student,” “young wife,” and “nurse.”

But she kept grinding away, making sure the local casting directors got to know her and trust her. She was on time and did her job because the worst thing for an actor at her level is negative feedback from the director or producers coming back to the casting agents.

So when the “wife” role came up, the casting agents called her to audition, and she was game. “You build relationships with these casting agents, and you trust they’re not going to put you into something beneath what you can do,” she said.

Plus, she knew that even if this particular MCU role didn’t work out, they might consider you for other Disney+ series — and there are many coming down the pike. So getting in the door was crucial.



Credit: TARA GULLEDGE PHOTOGRAPH

Byndloss is multi-racial. Her parents are both mixed-race, and she has a blend of European, African and Native American ancestry.

She grew up in Acworth and felt like an outsider in a predominantly white school until she joined drama club junior year. “They accepted me immediately,” she said, and she was hooked. She majored in theater, then jumped into acting as a career after college.

The fact her character is married to this “new” Captain America, who is white, she believes is not random.

“I don’t think this was blind casting,” she said. “Everything is planned in the MCU. It seems 100% intentional to me. It does mean a lot to me personally as a child of an interracial family.”

“I like that the issue of race is addressed in this series,” she added. “They have this giant platform of 100 million subscribers on Disney+. They can speak to what’s happening in this world and take on difficult issues. This particular series is grounded in some sense of reality. The future of America looks like me. It’s a melting pot. It makes sense I’m married to Captain America.”

## WHERE TO WATCH

“The Falcon and the Winter Soldier,” available on Disney +



# RIVAL

## May 8 Actress Gabrielle Byndloss tells Rival about her time on 'Ozark', 'Outsiders' and Marvel's 'Winter Falcon'



Before becoming a budding actress, Gabrielle Byndloss was just a small-town girl living in Georgia depicting, "It's really all that I know. We moved to Georgia when I was six years old from California for my parents' jobs. Growing up in the South seemed normal to me until I got older and could really recognize the lack of diversity where I was raised. It wasn't until then that I could really see the dynamics of what it meant to be raised in the South."

Byndloss competed in competitive cheerleading for four years where she learned that her favorite part of the sport was simply performing on stage for others. Competitive cheerleading then turned into theater.

When asked about the inauguration of her acting talent, she joked, "I started acting as a Sophomore in High School. However, if you asked my parents that question, they would say when I threw my first temper tantrum as a young child."

*They used to applaud at my tantrums and say, "The Academy Award goes to..." I have always been very dramatic."*

What Byndloss parents' claim was dramatics, blossomed into real potential as the young starlet got older. She got her first TV debut on *Halt and Catch Fire* where she learned about all of the people that it actually takes to execute a scene noting, "I had no idea how many people go into making me look good. I came from a theatre background where everyone did multiple jobs. I was in charge of my hair, makeup, wardrobe, and sometimes, even the sound or lighting design. When I stepped on set for the first time with *Halt and Catch Fire* I was in awe at how many people come together to make three minutes of a scene."

The actress then started booking roles in bigger television shows such as "Brenda" in *Ozark*, and eerie "Andrea Hopkins" in Stephen King's *The Outsiders* on HBO. Unfortunately, meeting Stephen King was not on the itinerary. It's safe to say that Gabrielle's personality strays far away from Hopkins' personal being, making a note that eerie characters are immensely interesting and complex to dissect and portray on screen.

"Andrea Hopkins is a master manipulator. She poses as a teacher to get insight into Glory Maitland's children and the scandal going on in the town. While she says she wants a job as a homeschool teacher, what she really wants is the story to help her rise to fame." She continues to say, "I love eerier characters. For me, there is more depth to them. They have a sense of dimension that the audiences sometimes never get to see. Just like real life. We only get a portion of someone's story, but in reality, there is so much more to them that we may never know."

Switching gears, Byndloss shows a different side of herself in *The Falcon & The Winter Soldier*. She depicts "Olivia Walker," a calm, soothing character, opposite of Andrea Hopkins in *The Outsiders*. She vocalizes that Walker and she differentiate from one another. Byndloss accredits herself as a more direct and honest being, while Olivia displays much more empathy and the ability to see from other perspectives other than her own.

The audition process from *The Falcon & The Winter Soldier* comes as a unique surprise, but not too shocking because of Marvel's fame.

"The audition process was wild," she says, "With Marvel, everything is top secret. The audition sides were 'dummy sides,' a script that is not the real script, and there wasn't much character breakdown given. I remember on the breakdown it said that while we were auditioning for the role of 'wife', we were actually being looked at for multiple different projects. On one hand, you felt the pressure since this was your audition for a potential Marvel show. On the other hand, there was a freedom in understanding that they just wanted to see you as a character to find out if you can fit into the Marvel Universe."

On working with director Kari Skogland, "Empowering. On all the TV shows I have worked on, I have only had three female directors. When I walked onto the set, I couldn't help but smile. Kari has confidence in her. You just trust her as a director and she gives you the space to create. She was wonderful to work with."

Talents besides acting?

"I am really good at couponing. It's my superpower. I can find a deal anywhere. I even got a deal on my wedding dress."

*The Falcon & The Winter Soldier* concluded its' season at the end of April and can be streamed on Disney+.





## Gabrielle Byndloss on starring in Marvel's The Falcon and The Winter Soldier

Actress Gabrielle Byndloss talks about auditioning for the role of the wife of the new Captain America, acting in Georgia, and more.



TV

# ‘The Falcon & the Winter Soldier’ actress Gabrielle Byndloss is just getting started



Gabrielle Byndloss is an actress to look out for.

Disney+ audiences were excited to see the latest addition to the Marvel Cinematic Universe, “The Falcon & the Winter Soldier” when it premiered in March exclusively on Disney+. Gabrielle Byndloss shone as John Walker’s wife, Olivia Walker.

Upon getting the role, the previous “Ozark” and “Dynasty” actress cried tears of excitement. But after the initial reaction came the big question — who would she be playing?

“I was like, ‘Oh, my gosh, I’m in the series. But what am I doing?’” Byndloss said. “Because with Marvel, they don’t want you to know that kind of information. You just are told you booked it. That’s all you know.”

Going into the audition process, Byndloss wasn’t told anything about the characters or even the name of the show. She only knew that she was auditioning for the role of a wife. Even once the role was accepted, much of the information about the show was kept a secret, in typical Marvel fashion.

Byndloss says that the secrecy of the show throughout shooting allowed her the time and space to fully process and appreciate the opportunity.

“It felt like I just got to enjoy it for myself,” Byndloss said thoughtfully. “I’ve got this secret information and I get to celebrate it for myself. So then when the rest of the world found out about it, I had already decided how I felt about it.”

“The Falcon & the Winter Soldier” shot in Atlanta, Georgia, where Byndloss resides. Though she grew up in Georgia and currently resides in Atlanta, the actress said that the Marvel set was so impressive that it felt like she was in a different city entirely.

Once on set, Byndloss quickly fell in love with her character.

“I love that Olivia represents the strength of a woman,” Byndloss said. “She comes in and, from the jump, you feel grounded and safe with her. She has this strength that doesn’t have to be stated. You just know that she is John Walker’s strength... There’s this loving heart to her. And I admire that about her because she teaches me how to have that a little bit more in my life.”

As a multi-racial actress, Byndloss recognizes the importance of the role she plays on screen — not only in the storyline, but in terms of representation.

“There is a pressure on any woman of color that steps into a role,” Byndloss explained. “There’s a higher standard that we’ve set ourselves up to personally. And also one that America sets you up to as well when they’re watching you.”

Byndloss has experienced many challenges as a woman of color in the acting industry. The actress said that even five years ago, casting directors were choosing her because she was considered “ethnically ambiguous.” Marvel allowed Byndloss to come into the role exactly as she is — a strong, unambiguous interracial woman.

“The reason I got into the industry is because when I was a kid, it was very limited for women of color,” Byndloss said. “I made a commitment to myself that I was going to be a part of that change. I was going to be in the industry, and I was going to clear a path for more women who looked like me to step into it, and be able to sign their life in the way like the way that they can.”

When she’s not acting, Byndloss stays sane by practicing yoga and meditation as a certified yoga instructor. This outlet helps her to remain motivated throughout the notorious rejections that every actor faces throughout their career. Through her platform as an actress and a yoga teacher, Byndloss hopes to inspire her audience, especially young black women, to stay true to themselves.

In a tearful piece of advice to a younger girl, Byndloss would say, “Don’t, for a second, forget how much you’re worth. This industry is going to try to push you in different ways and tell you that you need to be more of something. But who you are is what’s going to make you in this industry. There’s literally nobody else who can do *you* better than you.”

Up next, Byndloss is in a suspenseful drama series called “Long Slow Exhale” created by Pam Veasey for Spectrum Originals & BET.

“The Falcon & the Winter Soldier” is available for streaming now on Disney+.

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[#BlackWithNoChaser](#) [#BWNC](#) [#TheBlackLunchBreak](#)

The Black Lunch Break Season 3 - Episode 15: Gabrielle Byndloss (The Falcon & The Winter Solider)



EXCLUSIVES

## ‘The Falcon and the Winter Soldier’ Star Gabrielle Byndloss Didn’t Get into the Acting Business to Get Famous



Photo Credit: Tara Gullledge Photography

As we approach the eve of the series finale of *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*, there is still so much to unpack with so many of these characters. This not only includes our titular characters Sam Wilson (Anthony Mackie) and Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan), but also our tertiary characters as well. One of the most climactic moments of the season was seeing John Walker (Wyatt Russell) kill an innocent man in front of a crowd of people during a fit of rage. The one person in John's life, aside from his military buddy Lemar Hoskins (Clé Bennett), who keeps him grounded is his wife, Olivia Walker. In an exclusive interview with BGN via email, actor Gabrielle Byndloss who plays Olivia chats about her role and the impact this show has had on fans — particularly fans of color — this season.

**Congrats on now officially being a part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe! Can you share with our readers how you got the role of Olivia Walker?**

Thank you! I auditioned for the role of “wife.” It was originally two scenes that I recorded and sent in to the casting directors. From there, I was cast and would later figure out that my role was “Olivia Walker,” wife to John Walker.



**Episode 5, “Truth,” revealed a tell-tale moment of a scene you were in with John Walker featuring actor Julia Louis-Dreyfus. First of all, what was it like working with her? Were you given advance notice of who you would be working with when reading the script for the series, since Marvel is always so shrouded in secrecy about its projects?**

Yes, Marvel did let me know in advance that I would be working with her. Working with Julia Louis-Dreyfus was a dream. She commands the room with her infectious energy and knows how to really create a character. I was in awe at the fact that I was working alongside her because I knew I would learn so much. She is overall a wonderful human to know.

**As a multi-racial actress, can you share with us how significant the messaging of Sam’s story has been to you and the impact it has on BIPOC Marvel fans?**

For me, Sam’s message hits hard. At the end of *Avengers: Endgame*, I couldn’t help but think that Steve giving Sam the shield meant a lot more than just handing over the job. It’s different for a Black man to be considered the next “Captain America”. Sam says it best: “The history of that shield is ... complicated.” Marvel had a choice to just glide over the history or to use their platform to take a stance. [I cried watching Episode 5](#). Being a part of a show that is choosing to show the real meaning of being Black in America while also bringing in our culture and history is everything I have dreamed of. I didn’t get into this business to become famous. I got into this business to be in projects that made people think and feel in ways that might be hard at times. That’s the beauty of being an actress — bringing my own life experience to the screen where younger women can see themselves represented while others can gain perspective.

**What has been your favorite moment while filming? Are there any scenes either that you were in or not in that resonate with you the most?**

I don’t think any moment will top the first time I walked on the set. It was surreal. Just getting a pass to park that had my name and the word “Marvel” under it still gives me chills. I feel both deserving and honored to be added to the MCU. Everyone on set has been more than welcoming and created an atmosphere where we can play and work. However, nothing will top that first “it’s really happening” moment for me.

As far as scenes go, when Isaiah Bradley shares his story to Sam about his wife, it stuck with me. Isaiah represents the story of so many “erased” Black men, and Carl Lumbly does an incredible job telling it.

**Are there any current projects that you are working on that we should know about?**

Yes. I am currently working on a project called *Long Slow Exhale*, directed by Anton Cropper and created by Pam Veasey. It’s full of drama, suspense, and uses its platform to tell the story of real life. I play the role of Vivian, the lead JC’s assistant and right-hand woman.

Tune into the series finale of *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* this Friday on Disney+.



**Olivia is very supportive of John. Although we don’t get to see much of her relationship with John in this series, there’s obviously a lot to unpack between these two given the dynamic of who John Walker is. What would you suspect Olivia’s yin to John’s yang would be?**

Great question! Olivia is John’s comforting strength. She is able to stay grounded when John feels like everything around him is moving. They have a deep connection from being high school sweethearts. Olivia reads John easily and has the right comforting words to pull him back into the world.



Photographer Credit: Tara Gullede Photography

## Gabrielle Byndloss

1) Hi Gabrielle and a hearty Vents Magazine welcome to you today! Before we get too far down the road, how has your 2021 been thus far?

Hey! Thank you for having me. Honestly - 2021 has treated me very well. I don't think there was anywhere to go but up from 2020!

2) Major congratulations and kudos for your upcoming work in the uber-anticipated Marvel series *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*! For any fans that might have been hiding under a rock, can you tell us a little bit about what the show is about and which character you essay in it?

Thank you. YES! The highly anticipated show is finally here. I mean that for myself as well. After starting this project in 2019, I am so thrilled the show has premiered. *Falcon and The Winter Soldier* picks up after the movie "Avengers: Endgame" and tells the story of Sam (Falcon) and Bucky (Winter Soldier) in a buddy-cop action-thriller. I play Olivia Waker, John Walker's Wife.

3) You work with such a talented cast in *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*, such as Sebastian Stan, Anthony Mackie, Wyatt Russell and Adepero Oduye. What was it like for you as an actor to get to play with this crazy talented ensemble every day?

It's inspiring to watch talented actors showing off their craft and taking up space. There was such sense of camaraderie and collaboration on set. It allowed me to express myself and also learn from the ensemble. We were able to play and create together, which is an actors dream.

4) What was it like for you to work with the show's director Karl Skogland?

Man, can we just take a second and give a round of applause for the female directors in Hollywood. They are badassess. Being able to work with Karl is apart of history. A female director of a Marvel series on all six episodes. She came with such confidence that you really trusted her as a director. She also allowed for me to share my ideas and create the character of Olivia. I loved working with Karl and look forward to working with her sometime in future.

5) Were you a fan of the comic book iterations of Sam Wilson and Bucky Barnes prior to getting cast in the series?

I was not a comic book girl. I'll be honest. However, growing up, I was a 2000's kid, so working on a Disney project was always a dream of mine. Once the first MCU movie came out, I was hooked. The amount of time and thought that goes into the creation of the MCU is incredible to me. It just has a way of pulling you in, doesn't it?

6) Similar question - Did you pour over any of the source material - i.e. the actual comic books - for *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* as a form of homework or due diligence?

Yes - it's apart of your homework as an actor. The best way to play a role is to know the role in and out. You should be the expert on your character. The second I was booked for the role of Olivia Walker, I couldn't read enough.

7) This is your second foray into comic books, the first being in *Doom Patrol*. Do you as an actor gravitate towards these sort of fantastical and far-out stories and characters?

I love to tell a story. I also love kick ass characters which I find are typically in comic books. As an actor, you never miss an audition, because every audition is an opportunity. I am grateful that I continue to book characters in these fantastical stories because it reminds me of what it was like to

be a kid. Where your imagination could create anything, before that adult mind steps in.

8) Comic books have really swept the pop culture landscape over the last twenty years or so. What is it about these high mythical four colored creations that so captivates people's imaginations?

To me - it's exactly what I just pointed out. As adults we forget to play. Life becomes so rigorous and full of rules. Getting lost in these stories reminds us of those feelings we used to have. When we were so in the moment as children that it really did feel like anything was possible.

9) Prior to dropping into *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* you acted in the miniseries *The Outsider* which saw two episodes directed by your Ozark acting alum Jason Bateman. We've been fans of Jason's since his work eons ago on a blink-and-you-miss-it sitcom called *It's Your Move*. What was that reunion like for you with Jason and what sort of a director was he (i.e. was he a so-called "actor's director", or was he more technical)?

I was able to work directly with Jason on *Ozark*. He was an Actor's director FOR SURE. He came in, introduced himself, got to know who I was, and then stepped into the actor role. When the scene was done, he was able to switch hats effortlessly from actor to director. It was a breath of fresh air because he knew little things to really allow the scene to come to life, since he is an actor as well. For example, in our scene, we tried saying the lines so many different ways to create different reactions from my character. That doesn't happen all the time. We don't have a lot of time to play on set because we have so much packed into one day. Jason really brought the element of creation to both projects that I worked on, *The Outsider* and *Ozark*.

10) Any plans to venture into directing one fine day?

Ha! Never say never. Right now, I will keep my acting hat on. I am a big fan of taking on less so that you can make a bigger impact. I want to master the art of acting before stepping into another realm like directing.

11) What's coming up for you in the future? Can you drop a few hints for Vents readers?

No hints here. I can say, The series is incredibly thought out and entertaining. You will not be disappointed. Currently, I am working on a show called "Long Slow Exhale" featuring Rose Rollins and Josh Lucas. I play Vivian, Rose's assistant.

12) The first television credit I have for you is from the much missed show *The Vampire Diaries*. Any special memories of that freshman gig?

WOW. That gig was really impactful for me. I originally auditioned for a completely different role. After sending that in, the Casting Director called me in to work together on a different audition for the same show. Next thing I know, I booked the show for something TOTALLY different then I ever auditioned for. It was a great lesson in when you are right for a show, they will find a spot for you. I will also never forget that Casting Director giving me his time to allow me to book my first gig.

13) Final - SILLY! - Question: To take a page from Rob Reiner's classic 1986 film *Stand By Me*, who wins in a fight between *Mighty Mouse* and *Superman*?

HAHAHAH! I think I will have to go with Superman. Sorry *Mighty Mouse*, I can't turn my back on my own species :)



## Gabrielle Byndloss On The Timeliness Of ‘The Falcon And The Winter Soldier’

Gabrielle Byndloss. (Tara Gulledge Photography)

Gabrielle Byndloss is ecstatic to be a part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, especially on a project like *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*.

“It’s so surreal,” she said. “I’m actually tearing up thinking about it.”

Byndloss, who plays Olivia Walker, the wife of the new Captain America John Walker (Wyatt Russell), opened up about how important this series is to her and her desire to see questions about race discussed in the mainstream. In the interview below, we also talked about how her yoga and meditation practice helps her get into character and manage her anxiety, and what it feels like to be a part of two major comic book franchises at the same time.

*The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* is currently streaming weekly on Disney+.

**Monique Jones: We were introduced to your character Olivia in the second episode, which had a lot of important stuff in there that relates to the MCU and to today’s racial climate. But as for your character, how would you describe her?**

**Gabrielle Byndloss:** I would describe Olivia as the calming supportive strength [for Walker] and you get that vibe from her when she walked in and in hearing her voice. She is the soothing side to John and also brings strength at the same time, which is what he needs with all of the stuff that’s going on around him to really have that anchor of like, where are we, what are we doing, what’s happening?

**Since you mentioned Olivia’s calming nature, which was very evident in the episode, that brings to mind that you’re a meditation practitioner and yoga teacher. Do you think some of that experience with working on emotions and calmness helped in how you portrayed Olivia?**

Absolutely. I deal with anxiety all of the time which is how I found yoga and meditation and it’s 100% about the way of how I approached Olivia, because she is that calming side that comes in and even down to where my voice registered and how I just came up with my lines and how I delivered them has that same yogic feel to it. Like, when you can hear Olivia, you hear that everything else just kind of gets quiet. You’re drawn into what she’s saying. And for me, that’s exactly what happens with meditation. Everything can be going crazy around me. And then I throw on and meditation, that’s guided and I listened to it and everything starts to get quiet and all I’m hearing what’s going on in meditation and I can recenter.

**That definitely rings true for me because, full disclosure, I also have anxiety, depression, OCD—any anxious thing, I feel like I have it.**

[laughs] Yeah.

**And I also have been practicing meditation because it helps me realize that my thoughts are just thoughts and I can leave them aside and continue with my day. So all of the stuff you said makes perfect sense.**

You can get back to your power because [the thoughts] really do run wild in your head. And it’s until you say, ‘These are thoughts,’ that you can say, ‘I have power over my thoughts, I just have to choose to face them.’ I am right there with you with anxiety.

**This series has been on its surface about the Falcon [Anthony Mackie] reckoning with Chris Evans’ version of Captain America giving up the mantle and his shield. The Falcon has been reckoning with what it means to be Captain America. But the series is also about race in America and I think it probably couldn’t have come at a better time in America than when we are dealing with the aftermath of 2020, especially with George Floyd and his death. How do you think the series is tackling this tough topic?**

First of all, I want to say that I’m extremely proud to be in a series that’s tackling this, especially since I’ve been in the film industry for 10 years now and...[am] a Black woman watching this be a topic that needs to be addressed and brought up and not given the time it needs to. Marvel has such a platform to take a stand and [they chose] to center a new series around racial injustice and to take a powerful character to really question the idea of who America thinks is a hero. You take Captain America, and you have a certain image in your head through comic books, through media, through what we see as Americans every day, and Marvel using [the series] to ask the questions and to go on the journey of questioning it together. That automatically allows people to have an opinion. While it’s safer to not go that route [of questioning racial stereotypes], Marvel chose to go that route and to use every episode [to question race]. That to me is a powerhouse...To able to use their platform to take a stand on [racial injustice] is huge and I’m so happy to be a part of that.

**While you’re now a part of the MCU, you’re also a part of the DC Cinematic Universe in Doom Patrol. What it’s like to now be a part of two of the biggest comic book franchises out there?**

I feel the best word I could say is that it’s an honor, you know, that with both of the comic book industries, they have a lineage and they have diehard fans and they have history to them. I to be trusted to tell that story is a really big deal. And when you audition for the project, you don’t know really anything. You’re just using something that they call dummy sides, which typically don’t resemble anything in the script and you’re bringing yourself to them. Then from something like that, they trust you to tell this story that they know has such a strong fan base and also years of history they have to bring to it.

The fact that those platforms have trusted me to tell that story really is such an honor as an actor to not just have to do one thing or the other and to be trusted, to be like, “Yeah, you can help us tell this story and do it justice so that not only the fans love it, but it also does justice for the writers who created this series years before you were even born.



**One of the scenes in your episode of The Falcon and the Winter Soldier that stood out to me was the scene with Isaiah Bradley, the first American super-soldier. I remember reading about him years before, and it was fascinating to me how they put him in this series and it’s probably the best series they could have put him since it’s dealing with the topic of race. If or when you saw that scene, what was it like to see? What was it like to see Marvel really tackle race and discrimination through that character?**

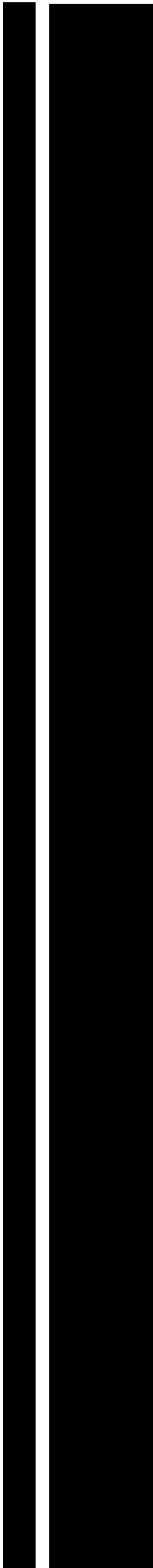
So I did not see that scene being filmed because the way that it works is if you’re not in the scene, you actually aren’t on set. So my first viewing was just like you as an audience member and watching it. It was a beautiful description of both sides, to me. You have Isaiah Bradley, a black superhero who has been jailed, standing there next to somebody like Falcon and say, even in this moment, things have changed completely. And then watching Falcon put together the fact that there was another Black super soldier that he had never heard about until in that moment and the person standing next to him [Bucky, played by Sebastian Stan] knew about it. So from an actor’s perspective, it was a beautiful way to see history in front of you, and also watch a character go through moments of “How did I not know about this? What does this mean? What would have been different had I known and how do I go forward from here?”

And then, you know, they hit it right after that with the scene with the police running up on the Falcon and the Winter Soldier. So it was all kinds of feels for me as an actor and also being a Black woman in America. Here we are showing a black superhero that would fit in and also had been put in jail and [Bradley’s backstory] had the exact way of resembling [the experience of] Black men in America. And then now we’re going to walk outside and still experience racism as the cops go straight to Falcon, thinking something’s going on with him. That moment was like, here we are, you know, in 2021 addressing issues that we need to address in a Marvel series right here. And it felt good to see it and also was like a little emotional for me. I teared up a little bit watching Isaiah. I think it was hard not to—[Carl Lumbly’s] portrayal was so great.

**What do you hope viewers take away from the series?**

That’s a great question. I’m going to sum it up and say that this series allows the audience to question a lot of things they might think. [Because the series airs every week] and you can’t binge, it allows you to have time to process what you’ve watched and to reflect instead of just focusing on how it plays out in the Marvel [universe]...I hope they can see a whole different side to the [questions regarding race in America]. Whether you’re on one side or the other, I hope [the series] can add a different perspective.







# CONNECT





# CONTACT

A woman with dark, curly hair is lying down against a pink background. She is wearing a teal, long-sleeved dress with a V-neckline. Her hands are resting on her chest. The word "CONTACT" is written in white capital letters in the top left corner.

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