

Ryan O'Connell

Ryan O'Connell is an actor, writer, and producer who will next be seen starring in *Special*, an eight-episode short-form Netflix series that releases on April 12. The series, which he wrote and executive produced along with Jim Parsons, is loosely based on O'Connell's own upbringing and experience as a gay man with cerebral palsy navigating the world. O'Connell recently served as an executive story editor on NBC's revival of *Will & Grace* and was on the writing staff of MTV's *Awkward*. He is the author of *I'm Special: And Other Lies We Tell Ourselves*, a part memoir, part manifesto which was published by Simon & Schuster in 2015 to critical acclaim. He served as the editor of *Thought Catalog* and has contributed to *Vice*, *BuzzFeed*, and numerous other publications.

Rob Forman

Rob Forman's first memory is of Princess Leia in her iconic golden bikini, choking Jabba the Hutt to death. This explains everything about his love of strong female characters, escapism, and genre storytelling, but nothing about his sexuality. Rob moved to Los Angeles immediately upon graduating with a business degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania to pursue a career in TV writing. After working as an agent's assistant, and then as a writer's assistant, on several series, Rob wrote a script for the sixth season of Lifetime's *Army Wives* and was promoted to staff writer for the following final season. After *Army Wives*, Rob wrote on CW's *Zombie* and developed original pitches, selling *JRL* to Freeform and *Thirst* to BET, while also co-writing *Indivisible*, an indie action/RPG video game from Lab Zero Games and 505 Games, slated for release on PS4, Switch, and XB1 in 2019.

Ben Corey Jones

After graduating from Morehouse College with a degree in English Literature and a minor in Finance, Ben Corey Jones worked on Wall Street as a speech writer and communications executive for a major investment bank. But after the 2007-08 Mortgage Crisis, he walked away from corporate America and discovered his passion for screenwriting and producing. In 2013, Jones participated in the prestigious ABC Television Writing Program and was a staff writer on ABC Family's *Chasing Life* and Amazon's *Hand of God*. He produced a comedy pilot, *Bros*, about three African American brothers (two straight, one gay) trying to find love in modern-day LA, which is in development at a major network. Jones also produced the feature film, *Step Sisters*, wrote for WGN's *Underground*, and created and wrote the drama series, *Candy*, which is in development at Universal Cable Productions. He has been a writer and producer on HBO's *Insecure* since its first season and is the showrunner and executive producer of the upcoming BET comedy series *Boomerang*.

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Our Lady J

After a career of performing music with pop icons like Sia and organizations including New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, the American Ballet Theatre and the Mark Morris Dance Group, Our Lady J began writing and producing on the GLAAD Media Award-, Golden Globe®- and Emmy®-winning Amazon series Transparent. She is currently a writer and producer on FX's Pose, which has the largest cast of transgender actors in television history. Our Lady J holds the honor of being the first out trans woman to perform at Carnegie Hall, as well as the first out trans writer to be nominated for a Writers Guild Award. She has been featured on Out Magazine's "Out 100" and The Huffington Post's list of "Transgender Icons."

Gregg Araki

Gregg Araki earned an MFA in Film Production from the USC School of Cinematic Arts and a BA in Film Studies from UC Santa Barbara. He has directed episodes of numerous TV shows, including Netflix's 13 Reasons Why, Amazon's Red Oaks, The CW's Riverdale, Paramount's Heathers and ABC's American Crime. Araki has also made 11 acclaimed independent features, including White Bird in a Blizzard (2014), Kaboom (2011), Smiley Face (2007), Mysterious Skin (2005), Splendor (1999), Nowhere (1997), The Doom Generation (1995), Totally F***Ed Up (1994) and The Living End (1992). His films have screened at the world's most renowned festivals, including Sundance, Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Toronto, New York, London and Deauville.

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