

# BEST SEASON EVER!

The stars of 'The Good Wife' dish on the show's exciting new direction — and Sunday night's shocking finale



In the Season 5 finale, Alicia (Julianna Margulies) and Cary (Matt Czuchry) talk about a merger.



After the shocking courtroom shooting in the March 23 episode, Will (Josh Charles) lies dead.



New firm Florrick/Agos celebrates its formation in Alicia's apartment.



Alicia and Diane (Christine Baranski) unite in grief over Will's death.

By ROBERT RORKE

**T**HE creative forces at "The Good Wife" ended the show's best season ever with a game-changing finale that raises the already

dramatic stakes to an unheard-of level for the CBS drama. Now ending its fifth season, it proved that even an entrenched show has the ability to reinvent itself and become part of the conversation again in ways that network television drama seldom does these days.

The shocks came fast and furious as the

## PULSE

attorneys connived and finagled, bluffed and maneuvered, thanks mostly to a technical glitch that resulted in many indiscretions. During a double lawsuit against Lockhart/Gardner and Florrick/Agos, a teleconference camera was left on in a meeting room at L/G and attorneys at F/A learned

way too much about their own future.

Cary Agos (Matt Czuchry), Alicia Florrick (Julianna Margulies) and their colleagues listened in horror as L/G attorneys David Lee (Zach Grenier) and Louis Canning (Michael J. Fox) plotted to shut

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# NEW LEASE ON WIFE

**POWER  
PLAY!**



In one of the season's last — and best — scenes, Diane meets with the Florrick/Agos team and pitches herself as a new employee for their firm.

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down their firm in 48 hours.

"You can't be the one listening in and have it hit you in the face like that," says Robert King, who executive produces the show along with his wife, Michelle. "It hurts."

Then news of a possible merger between the two firms exposed the frailties in the partnership between Alicia and Cary.

Cary cringed with mortification as we watched his girlfriend, bisexual puppeteer Kalinda Sharma (Archie Panjabi), phone him to plan a rendezvous — in bed, of course — to feel him out about a merger between the two firms.

"At that moment there's a lot going on for Cary," Czuchry tells *The Post* of his character. "He's trying to save the firm."

Other power plays bubble up outside the office: Alicia's husband, Illinois Gov. Peter Florrick (Chris Noth), summons Diane Lockhart

(Christine Baranski) to his office. Early on in the season, Florrick had tapped Diane for a Supreme Court judgeship, until he learned that Alicia had been fired by Will Gardner (Josh Charles) — Alicia's ex-lover and Diane's partner — for planning to leave the firm to start her own with Cary. Imagining that the governor would offer again to name her to the Supreme Court, Diane meets with Florrick and his campaign manager, Eli Gold (Alan Cumming), and is chagrined when he only asks her to run for state's attorney.

"It's the final insult," Baranski tells *The Post*.

In the weeks following Will's courtroom murder — Season 5's most devastating event — Diane faced a hostile work environment as Lee and Canning, who took Will's place and immediately schemed to become a managing partner, sought to push her out. Then Diane amazed herself when

she decided to walk away and stop fighting those guttersnipes.

Baranski was stunned when she read the script: "Every time Diane walks past Will's office, she sees Canning in his seat, and it's harrowing. So she thinks, 'OK, guys, you keep it. It's not the place I built. It's quite dramatic and so appropriate.'"

Standing on the sidewalk outside the building with Kalinda, who has become her confidante, she makes a shocking decision: She calls Alicia for a late-night meeting and proposes that the attorneys allow her to join their firm.

"She's sitting there like Jesus at the Last Supper in the red dress with all the disciples around her and Judas [Alicia] to the left," says Baranski.

The irony of Diane looking for a berth at Florrick/Agos could not be richer, as Season 5 kicked off with her discovery that Alicia was looking to leave Lockhart/Gardner



**BETRAYAL!**

Alicia is escorted out of the Lockhart/Gardner offices by security guards.

with Cary and take their clients with them.

"It's just been an incredibly rough ride for Diane," Baranski says. "Losing the judgeship. Then being the one to discover Alicia's duplicity. Then after the struggle at Lockhart/Gardner to stay on [her] feet regardless of Alicia and Cary leaving."

The narrative arc of Season 5 hinged on an early episode called "Hitting the Fan" — the most exciting on the series in years — when Alicia and Cary's betrayal was exposed, Will fired Alicia, and Diane fired Cary.

"When we got the script for 'Hitting the Fan,' everybody came to the set, ready to take it to the next level, because we knew this could be a special season," Czuchry says. "And it's touched a nerve with a lot of people."

Baranski says the reward of doing a quality series like "The Good Wife" is that "you get to tell the story of your character over years, and when something happens that's painful, people are shaken and they share your pain. We're riding on this strength. The women on the show had a huge reckoning in their [lives]. Kalinda's acting out sexually. Diane and Alicia were just hit by a bolt of lightning. They've been changed forever."

The Alicia in Season 1, who frantically embarked on a job search and

started her own firm after her husband went to prison, is someone who has earned the audience's respect. She's learned to fight back with the best of them. She's learned how to survive.

"In the beginning, she was a mom who came from suburbia and had simple views of right and wrong, and those views became more complicated," says King. "Now she sometimes has to do something that seems wrong to do something right."

Her steely resolve enabled her to put her affair with Will behind her, move from under his wing and eventually acknowledge that her marriage to Gov. Florrick was useful to her professionally, even if there was no love there and certainly no sex.

"We're fascinated by this whole power couple dynamic," says King. "It's a new question for this century. How is marriage being rebuilt if there's no love left?"

King says Season 6 will pick up a minute after the finale left off, when Eli, dreaming of power-couple headlines, unexpectedly asks Alicia if she'd like to run for the office Diane declined — state's attorney.

Will she take his suggestion seriously? "Not at first," says King. "That's probably the furthest thing from her mind."

## 'GOOD WIFE' SEASON HIGHLIGHTS



**MARCH 23, 2014** Will wipes everything off Alicia's desk after confronting her over the coup she staged with Cary Agos. He fires her.



**MARCH 23, 2014** In the most surprising scene of the season, Will gets shot in the crossfire when his client Jeffrey Grant steals a court officer's gun.



**MARCH 30, 2014**  
Alicia listens to Will's last phone message.



**MARCH 30, 2014** Alicia goes home to the husband she doesn't love.



**APRIL 13, 2014** Diane and Alicia begin to heal their rift after Will's funeral.



**MAY 18, 2014** When Eli asks Alicia if she'd run for state's attorney she says, "What?"

## OFF-B'WAY REVIEW

"Too Much Sun" is too heavy with subplots, but we can't get enough of a dazzling Linda Lavin. Go to [nypost.com](http://nypost.com) for the full review.