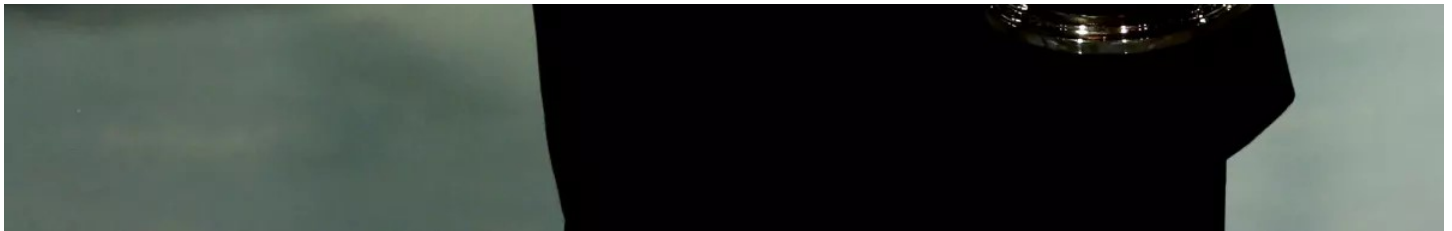




AWARDS

## 20 years ago at the Emmys: That time when series just kept coming back





Executive producer Mitchell Hurwitz called winning the 2004 comedy series Emmy “a huge thing for us.” (Kevork Djansezian / Associated Press)

**By Randee Dawn**

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Twenty years is a long time, particularly in television. Back in 2004, when the 56th Primetime Emmy Awards were held on Sept. 19 at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, broadcast TV still had a firm grip on most categories — though cable was making serious inroads. It was also the era when, if a show got canceled, it stayed off the air.

That’s no longer true for many series — including three that earned nominations in 2004. “Arrested Development” (Fox) won the comedy category in 2004 in its rookie season, stuck around on Fox for two more seasons before cancellation — and then returned in 2013, 2018 and 2019 on Netflix. Category competitor “Will & Grace” (NBC) eventually completed its eight-season run, and then returned to the network for three shortened seasons in 2017. And fellow competitor “Sex and the City” returned in sequel form as “And Just Like That” in 2021.

But then there’s “Curb Your Enthusiasm.” A competitor in the category in 2004, “Curb” has trod its own path, premiering in 2000 before taking time off, coming back, taking more time off and returning 24 years after it premiered for a final season on HBO. This leads to an interesting bit of historical trivia, because “Curb” may have over 50 nominations total (and two wins for editing in 2012 and directing in 2003) — but it holds the record for having the most comedy series Emmy nominations (10) without having won the category.

And now, with the series' 11th nomination, that all could change with the upcoming Emmy Awards on Sept. 15.

None of this could have been predicted in 2004, when "Arrested" beat out "Will & Grace," "Everybody Loves Raymond" (CBS) and "Sex and the City" (HBO). This was only the second time Fox had won this particular award ("Ally McBeal" in 1999 was the other). "Arrested" would go on to win two more Emmys that night for its directing (future Marvel Universe directors Anthony Russo and Joe Russo) and writing (Mitchell Hurwitz).

Executive producer Hurwitz accepted the award from presenter Ellen DeGeneres, calling the award "a huge thing for us" and "outrageous." He gave credit to Gail Berman, then the entertainment president at Fox, for her support; cast member Jeffrey Tambor, who also had been nominated that night (and whose behavior on set would make headlines in later years); and Ron Howard, the show's narrator and executive producer.

"I want to tell you something about Ron Howard," said Hurwitz, tongue in cheek. "I know that he has a reputation in this town as being kind of a diva, but he's actually a pretty good guy and he's amazingly creative and he spearheaded this thing and we hope to keep his spirit in this always."

He ended the speech with a callback to the show's low ratings: "You know what?" he asked. "Let's watch it [now]."

Meanwhile, "Curb" aside, the other series could take comfort: Each would have its night to shine, some more than once. "Raymond" was nominated seven times in the category and had wins that bracketed this year (2003 and 2005). "Sex and the City" won the series prize in 2001 and had six show nominations; and "Will" won the category in 2000, also with six total show nominations.

As for non-award-related trivia: DeGeneres, who presented “Arrested” with its award, would begin dating “Arrested” actress Portia de Rossi later in 2004. The two have been married since 2008.

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