



GEORGIA ENTERTAINMENT SCENE

Atlanta's Kat Graham channels own grief in 'Tyler Perry's Duplicity' on Amazon

'He is my idol,' said the 'Vampire Diaries' alum, referencing Perry



Kat Graham stars as an attorney in "Tyler Perry's Duplicity" out on Amazon. AMAZON

By Rodney Ho

20 hours ago



Former "Vampire Diaries" star and Atlanta resident Kat Graham has tried out for multiple roles on Tyler Perry projects over the years with no luck, including "Six Triple Eight," a historical Netflix drama starring Kerry Washington that's Perry's most prestigious project to date.

But the Atlanta media mogul finally found a juicy lead role for Graham in his new thriller "Tyler Perry's Duplicity," now available on Amazon Prime.

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"I put a lot of pressure on myself," said Graham in an interview with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution in the lobby of the Ritz-Carlton downtown last week with three other cast members. "He is my idol. I wanted to be the best version of myself. I had to lean into trusting him to help me do that. I've been waiting for this for 16 years. Be cool about it!"

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Graham, portrays Marley, a high-powered attorney dating a former client Ted (Tyler Lopley). She takes on a case involving her friend Rodney (Joshua Adeyeye), shot dead by a young white police officer named Caleb (Jimi Stanton).

Rodney also happens to be the husband of Fela (Meagan Tandy), a TV broadcaster and Marley's BFF. "She's seemingly living such a wonderful life, and then it falls apart," Tandy said. (In a classic Perry moment, Fela learns about her husband's death reading a teleprompter during a live newscast. Clearly, her TV producer had a sadistic streak.)

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Marley's connections don't stop with Fela and Rodney. Her boyfriend Ted also happens to be buds with Kevin (Atlanta resident RonReaco Lee), a veteran Black cop who had taken Caleb under his wing with echoes of the movie "Training Day." But the day goes awry as he watches Caleb shoot Rodney to death, thinking Rodney's smartphone was a gun.



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For Marley, this isn't a time to just grieve. She wants justice for Rodney and her friend Fela. So she threatens to sue the fictional city of Chesterfield on behalf of Fela for a huge amount of money while trying to figure out what Rodney was up to before he died.

"Marley," Graham admitted, "is very much a walking conflict of interest."

To make matters worse, Fela at his funeral utters angry public statements that incite some residents to protest and riot. In other words, this movie has a bit more topical messaging than the usual Perry melodrama.



Credit: Quantrill Colbert/Prime

"Tyler Perry's Duplicity" features actors RonReaco Lee, Kat Graham and Tyler Lopley. AMAZON

Graham incorporated her own grief into Marley's. [In 2021, her brother died in a double homicide.](#)

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"Grief is so complex," Graham said, "especially when it takes you by surprise. You feel like you have to put the pieces together."

Her most trenchant moment as Marley is when she collapses emotionally in her car after viewing a bodycam of Rodney's death. "I've had experiences where I have felt powerless in my own life," Graham said. "I know this is an unpopular opinion but I'm not a good actor. I'm good at processing my stuff on screen. That's about it."

Perry, she said, advised her via a walkie-talkie while she prepared for the scene. He told her to think about George Floyd and Trayvon Martin.

"I started to feel almost out of control," she said. "So much comes up when you think about that stuff. It's hard to monitor yourself as an actor when you are emotionally invested and have a lot of anger and rage at a system that can be unfair."

Tandy told her, "You killed it. It felt so very real."

Lepley added: "We saw your raw emotions. It wasn't just sadness. I thought it was portrayed beautifully."

