

= Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. =

Marvel 's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. , or simply Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. , is an American television series created for ABC by Joss Whedon , Jed Whedon , and Maurissa Tancharoen , based on the Marvel Comics organization S.H.I.E.L.D. (Strategic Homeland Intervention , Enforcement , and Logistics Division) , a fictional peacekeeping and spy agency in a world of superheroes . It is set in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) , sharing continuity with the films and other television series of the franchise . The series is produced by ABC Studios , Marvel Television , and Mutant Enemy Productions , with Jed Whedon , Tancharoen , and Jeffrey Bell serving as showrunners .

The series revolves around the character of Phil Coulson , with Clark Gregg reprising his role from the film series , and his team of S.H.I.E.L.D. agents , who must deal with various unusual cases and enemies , including Hydra and the Inhumans . Joss Whedon began developing a S.H.I.E.L.D. pilot following the success of his film Marvel 's The Avengers , and Gregg was confirmed to reprise his role in October 2012 . The series was officially picked up by ABC in May 2013 , and also stars Ming @-@ Na Wen , Brett Dalton , Chloe Bennet , Iain De Caestecker , and Elizabeth Henstridge , with Nick Blood , Adrianne Palicki , Henry Simmons , and Luke Mitchell joining in later seasons . Prosthetic makeup is created with Glenn Hetrick 's Optic Nerve Studios , while Legacy Effects contributes other practical effects . The visual effects for the series are created by FuseFX , and have been nominated for multiple awards . Several episodes directly crossover with films or other television series set in the MCU , while other characters from MCU films and Marvel One @-@ Shots also appear throughout the series .

The first season originally aired from September 24 , 2013 , to May 13 , 2014 , while the second season aired from September 23 , 2014 , to May 12 , 2015 . A third season premiered on September 29 , 2015 , concluding on May 17 , 2016 . In March 2016 , Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. was renewed for a fourth season , scheduled to premiere on September 20 , 2016 . After starting the first season with high ratings but mixed reviews , the ratings began to drop while reviews improved . This led to much lower but more consistent ratings , as well as more consistently positive reviews in the subsequent seasons . Several characters created for the series have since been introduced to the comic universe and other media , while a spin @-@ off series , centered on Blood and Palicki 's characters Lance Hunter and Bobbi Morse and titled Marvel 's Most Wanted , received a pilot order in August 2015 ; it was ultimately passed on in May 2016 .

= = Premise = =

The first season sees S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent Phil Coulson putting together a small team of S.H.I.E.L.D. agents to handle strange new cases . They investigate Project Centipede and its leader , " The Clairvoyant " , eventually uncovering that the organization is backed by Hydra , which has infiltrated S.H.I.E.L.D. In the second season , following the destruction of S.H.I.E.L.D. , now @-@ Director Coulson and his team look to restore trust from the government and public while dealing with Hydra , a faction of anti @-@ superhuman S.H.I.E.L.D. agents , and the newly revealed Inhumans (who possess special abilities) . During the third season , Coulson begins a secret mission to assemble the Secret Warriors , a team of Inhumans , as Hydra restores its ancient Inhuman leader Hive to power .

= = Cast and characters = =

Clark Gregg as Phil Coulson :

A S.H.I.E.L.D. agent who oversees many of the division 's field operations . In April 2013 , Gregg agreed to join the series after hearing Whedon 's explanation for Coulson 's resurrection , following the character 's death in The Avengers , which he called " fascinating " and " true to the world of the comics and mythology " . On whether the resurrected Coulson would be the same as before he died , Gregg said that the character had to have changed in some way , but he may not understand how much he has changed . Gregg said that he approached Coulson 's promotion to Director of

S.H.I.E.L.D. as being his dream job , which at the same time forced the character to adopt a more sensible and level @-@ headed attitude , such as that of Nick Fury .

Ming @-@ Na Wen as Melinda May :

A S.H.I.E.L.D. ace pilot and weapons expert , nicknamed " the Cavalry " . Joss Whedon had the character , who was originally listed with the name Agent Althea Rice on casting sheets , " rolling around in his head " for a long time . In preparation for the role , Wen was given some background stories about the character but was not told how she gained her reputation or came to be the character that she is . Wen found it challenging to play a character who is respected by those around her , even though the audience doesn 't know why , and stated that she eventually learned to use personal experiences where she had been " scarred or ... greatly disappointed " to try and relate to the character . Talking about May 's reasons for staying with S.H.I.E.L.D. , Wen explained that it is more her loyalty and platonic love for Coulson than any feelings about S.H.I.E.L.D. that make her stay .

Brett Dalton as Grant Ward and Hive :

Ward is a Hydra agent who poses as a S.H.I.E.L.D. black ops specialist . From the conception of the series it was decided that he would be a traitor , with Jed Whedon explaining that they wanted to have " infiltration based on betrayal " on a small scale to represent the same thing happening on a massive scale , and to make the Hydra reveal more personal for the characters . Following the death of his Hydra superior , John Garrett , Dalton explained that he felt that Ward was always loyal to Garrett rather than Hydra , and so without Garrett would become more of a wildcard , eventually accepting his position as an antagonist to S.H.I.E.L.D. He is killed by Coulson in season three , and his body is possessed by the ancient Inhuman Hive . Austin Lyon portrays a young Ward .

Chloe Bennet as Daisy " Skye " Johnson / Quake :

An Inhuman hacktivist and S.H.I.E.L.D. recruit who eventually becomes an agent with the ability to sense vibrations and create earthquakes . When the character of Skye was introduced to the series , it was always intended that she would be the MCU version of Johnson , as Tancharoen explained , " there are always the series of clearances " , but the executive producers always wanted Skye to become someone else , and Daisy Johnson was the main character that they wanted . Bennet felt that the character was someone who would wear her heart on her sleeve , but she also has some control over her emotions . Talking about the changes to the character after it was revealed that she was Daisy Johnson and an Inhuman , Tancharoen noted that the discovery would have consequences for the character 's relationships , especially with Coulson . During the third season , the character no longer goes by " Skye " , and by the end is known as " Quake " to the public .

Iain De Caestecker as Leo Fitz :

An agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. who specializes in engineering , especially weapons technology . De Caestecker , in describing the character , said that " He ? s quite passionate about what he does [but] he doesn ? t really understand emotions as much " . Fitz has a lot of interaction with Simmons in the series , with De Caestecker explaining that " they ? ve got this kind of weird chemistry together , and they just kind of fit each other in a very weird way . " Following injuries the character receives at the end of the first season , the series began to deal with brain trauma , as De Caestecker explained that he and the writers did a lot of research to not trivialize it and to always be respectful towards it .

Elizabeth Henstridge as Jemma Simmons :

A S.H.I.E.L.D. biochemist who specializes in life sciences (both human and alien) . Henstridge described her character as " intelligent and focused and curious ... she ? s got a wonderful relationship with Fitz . They kind of bounce off each other . " Talking about Fitz and Simmons being separated over the course of the series , Henstridge noted that it " brings a whole new dynamic just to them as characters in discovering what it 's like to have to be independent " since they have been basically inseparable since meeting . On the harsher side of Simmons seen later in the second season , after the reveal of the Inhumans and the subsequent death of Agent Triplett (B.J. Britt) , Henstridge said that Simmons has " always been very mathematical in a way She 's had a traumatic event and she 's gone straight back to what she knows of trying to make everything black and white . "

Nick Blood as Lance Hunter :

A mercenary before agreeing to join S.H.I.E.L.D. On his character joining the cast in the second season , Blood explained " Lance doesn't really care that much of what people think of him He doesn't bow down to the etiquette of the S.H.I.E.L.D. hierarchy . " He later elaborated that the character feels very independent , so would probably not want to admit no longer feeling like an outsider . Also , " he doesn't have too much respect for authority and titles ... if Coulson does something he respects , that 's all good . If he doesn't , he 's going to say something . " On Hunter 's on @-@ again , off @-@ again relationship with Bobbi Morse , Blood said , " there is a lot of truth in it of those relationships you have where it 's kind of , ' can 't live with each other , can 't kill each other ' " .

Adrianne Palicki as Bobbi Morse :

Hunter 's ex @-@ wife and an agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. who spent time undercover within Hydra . Palicki , a comic fan , was approached by the showrunners specifically for the part during season two , and at first hesitated to take the role given that she likely could not play another MCU character if she did . Palicki already had martial arts and gun training , but had to learn to use the character 's signature arnis sticks , and noted similarities between Morse 's fighting style and that of Scarlett Johansson 's Black Widow from the MCU films . Bell , in response to a question on whether Morse had more secrets than those revealed during the second season , stated that " she and Hunter have been keeping secrets from one another , evidently for years " and something about her is that she seems to be more loyal to an idea than anything else , so what may seem in the short term as a betrayal by her is usually for what she sees as the greater good .

Henry Simmons as Alphonso " Mack " MacKenzie :

A S.H.I.E.L.D. mechanic with a distrust of the alien and superhuman . On the different dynamic that a mechanic brings to the S.H.I.E.L.D. team , Simmons felt that his character would not have to deal with the same stress the other agents do by having to go into dangerous situations constantly . He felt that Mack is more worried about getting his job done away from the field , because he wants to contribute . About Mack 's stance on violence , Simmons confirmed that Mack does not like violence , but will do " what he has to do . "

Luke Mitchell as Lincoln Campbell :

An Inhuman with the ability to manipulate electrical charges . Regarding the character 's introduction as a human @-@ looking Inhuman , Bell explained that the series already featured " a guy with no eyes " and " a woman who now is covered in thorns " but , like the X @-@ Men , there are also Inhumans who are " just attractive people with powers " , and so Campbell represents them in the series . On casting Mitchell , Bell said " Luke just really impressed us [he] had a nice quality , and we felt he might be a good person to sort of usher Skye into this other world . "

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

After The Walt Disney Company purchased Marvel Entertainment in 2009 , they announced that a Marvel Television division was being formed . In the following months , various pilots based on comics from Marvel 's catalog went into development . In July 2012 , Marvel Television entered into discussions with ABC to make a new series set in the Marvel Cinematic Universe , though at that point it was undecided what it would be . The series was described as " ' a kernel of an idea ' with a number of scenarios being explored , including a high @-@ concept cop show . " The next month , it was announced that Marvel 's The Avengers director Joss Whedon , creator of other popular television shows such as Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Firefly , would be involved in the series ' development .

In August 2012 , ABC ordered a pilot for a series called S.H.I.E.L.D. to be written and directed by Joss Whedon , with Jed Whedon and Maurissa Tancharoen also writing . Disney CEO Bob Iger greenlit the series after watching the Marvel One @-@ Shot short film Item 47 . In April 2013 , ABC

announced that the series would be titled Marvel 's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. , and it was officially picked up for a full season in May 2013 . The series was renewed for a second season in May 2014 , a third in May 2015 , and a fourth in March 2016 .

= = = Writing = = =

Jed Whedon , Tancharoen , and Jeffrey Bell act as the series ' showrunners , and supervise all creative decisions , with Joss Whedon having assisted them before he started work on Avengers : Age of Ultron . Bell explained that while one person is writing a script , two others can be breaking stories , so that a story can be broken every few weeks . If the executive producers sign off on a story , one of the writers then produces an outline , gets notes on it from the showrunners , writes a full script , gets notes on it from ABC and the production crew , and then goes to set to produce the episode .

In January 2013 , Joss Whedon deflected any direct influences from other series , such as the efforts of Fox Mulder and Dana Scully in The X @-@ Files , and explained that while the show would involve people with powers and the spectacle of science @-@ fiction storytelling , it would focus on " the peripheral people ... the people on the edges of the grand adventures . " On the balance between creating new material and drawing from existing mythology , Bell noted that telling stories that can entertain both Marvel fans and non @-@ Marvel fans is challenging , and that for the series they try to add nods to the MCU films or the comics in a way that works well on its own for all viewers , but could also mean more for a fan . On where the series can draw from the comics , Jed Whedon explained that there are areas of the comics that the series is not allowed to go to , and that ultimately they only use the comics for inspiration in generating their own story . Tancharoen elaborated that , " We ? re always going to be inspired and influenced by the comics , but of course on the show , we ? ll always be doing our spin to it . "

About comparisons between the scope of the series and that of the films , Bell said that ABC and Marvel had been very generous with the series ' budget , and that the production could not complain for a network series , but that it was nothing compared to the films or even series like Game of Thrones . He explained that the series does attempt to create " Marvel moments " as best it can , but pointed out that some of the more memorable moments from the films are smaller , character moments ? something that works really well on television ? so the series strives for those when it cannot afford more scope and scale . Jed Whedon elaborated that they look at a sequence and try to keep only what is required to tell the story , so " If a monster is landing on a car , instead of showing the whole monster leaping through the skyline , we want to be in the car with the character having that experience . "

Following Samuel L. Jackson 's cameo in an ' end tag ' at the end of " 0 ? 8 ? 4 " , Bell explained that the series would consistently be using these extra scenes at the end of episodes . " Sometimes it 'll be funny , sometimes it 'll be a mythology thing , ... or an extra little reveal about ... the episode , " Bell explained , and compared them to the post credits scenes of the MCU films .

In September 2015 , Bell looked back on the first two seasons and talked about the challenges of and changes in the series . He noted the negative reception from fans concerning the low number of recognizable characters like Coulson , but pointed out that fans seemed to have grown to like the series ' original characters as they had been developed over time . He explained that with the increasing amount of characters and complex relationships in the series , having different pairings and building new emotional relationships was important , and stated that " whether it ? s a quiet moment or in action , we [hope to] deepen the audience ? s love and concern , and hopes for these characters . " Bennet likened the end of the third season to " the end of the first book of S.H.I.E.L.D. [The third season] finale feels like the end of something bigger and the beginning of a whole new tone for the show . "

= = = Casting = = =

In October 2012 , a casting sheet for five lead roles was sent out . At the New York Comic Con ,

Joss Whedon , Kevin Feige , and Clark Gregg announced that Gregg would be reprising his role as agent Phil Coulson from Iron Man , Iron Man 2 , Thor , The Avengers , and the Marvel One @-@ Shots in the pilot , and would " headline " the series . Actress Ming @-@ Na Wen was cast as Melinda May . The next month , Elizabeth Henstridge and Iain De Caestecker were cast as Jemma Simmons and Leo Fitz , respectively , while newcomer Brett Dalton was cast as Grant Ward . In December , Chloe Bennet was chosen out of more than 400 actresses to play Skye , the sixth and final regular for the first season ; the character is revealed in the second season to be Daisy Johnson , and no longer goes by " Skye " starting with the third .

At San Diego Comic @-@ Con 2014 , Nick Blood was announced as cast in the role of Lance Hunter for the second season , while the character of Bobbi Morse was revealed to be appearing . That August , Henry Simmons joined the cast as Alphonso " Mack " MacKenzie , in a recurring role , and Adrienne Palicki was cast as Morse in a guest role , to appear in the season two episode " A Hen in the Wolf House " , with the potential to return . The next month , the entire first season principal cast were confirmed to be regulars for the second season , along with Blood . Palicki joined them with the season two episode " Aftershocks " . In February 2015 , Luke Mitchell was cast as Lincoln Campbell , in a recurring role .

All season two principal cast members returned for the third season , with Simmons and Mitchell joining them , promoted from their recurring roles . In October 2015 , the ancient Inhuman Hive was introduced ; for the second part of season three , it possesses the corpse and retains the memories of Grant Ward , who is again portrayed by Brett Dalton . Blood and Palicki left the main cast following the season three episode " Parting Shot " , to star in the spin @-@ off show Marvel 's Most Wanted .

= = = Design = = =

= = = = Costumes = = = =

Betsy Heimann was the costume designer for the pilot , but left the series due to film commitments . Assistant costume designer Ann Foley took over for subsequent episodes , and worked closely with Tancharoen to create " very strong , different characters " whose " looks evolve along with the show . " Foley watched every MCU film , paying special attention to The Avengers , and was also inspired by such films as Skyfall and Mission Impossible : Ghost Protocol . Foley also brought on concept artists Phillip Boutte Jr. and Josh Shaw to assist with the design process .

After reading each script , Foley would do her own research , before discussing the look of the episode with the writers . She then studies the comics , general fashion , and history to get a look that is recognizable to fans , but fits into the more realistic world of the series . Costumes are either custom made or bought , and the actors are brought in for fittings before filming . This process was often challenging due to the series ' eight @-@ day @-@ per @-@ episode schedule . Foley stated that all costumes take a similar amount of time to create , whether they are based on the comics or not . Marvel CCO Joe Quesada is involved in the approval process when costuming preexisting characters .

The costumes go through a natural evolution in the series . There is a shift at the end of the first season to a darker look , and all the characters have " definitely grown up " during the second season . In the third season there is another shift , " from the ragtag group of soldiers and scientists to [a] more precise militaristic outfit " . Despite this increasing darkness in the costumes , Foley intended to define each character as they are introduced and to have them always be recognizable and identifiable . On the variety of costumes created for each character , Foley pointed out that she prefers to have set pieces in the characters ' " closets " , as " it ' s not a fashion show " . For example , " a guy like Ward isn ' t going to have twenty jackets in his closet . He is going to have one that he uses all of the time . "

= = = = Practical effects = = = =

Prosthetic makeup for the series is designed in conjunction with Glenn Hetrick of Optic Nerve Studios . Hetrick began work on the series with the second season , to create Raina 's Inhuman look , and returned for the third season to design and create the more " unique " -looking Inhumans such as Lash . Practical effects and props for the series are created by Legacy Effects , who have also worked on the MCU films . Work on the series by Legacy includes Daisy Johnson 's gauntlets for the third season .

=== Title sequence ===

The third season introduces a new title sequence for the series , replacing the one that appeared in the first two seasons . The title sequence in " 4 @, @ 722 Hours " is drastically different from the design introduced for the third season , with the series ' title in the episode 's typeface silently fading onto the screen over the back drop of the planet Simmons is stranded on .

=== Filming ===

Production for the pilot took place almost entirely in Los Angeles to accommodate Joss Whedon 's schedule , while the rest of the series is primarily filmed in Culver City , California . Additional filming has also taken place around the world , including in Paris , France , Stockholm , Sweden , and Old San Juan , Puerto Rico . The series is filmed on Arri Alexa cameras , with David Boyd serving as director of photography on the pilot , and Feliks Parnell , Jeff Mygatt , and Allan Westbrook doing so throughout the rest of the series . Garry Brown is the second unit director for the series , with stunts coordinated by Tanner Gill .

=== Visual effects ===

FuseFX serves as the lead visual effects vendor for Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. , with additional work by Pixomondo , Cosa , Greenhaus GFX , Lion VFX , and Synaptic . There are typically 2000 visual effects shots per season , with 10 to 12 days to work on the effects for one episode once background plates have been received from filming . Mark Kolpack serves as visual effects supervisor for the series . David Altenau was the in @-@ house supervisor at FuseFX for " Pilot " through episode eight , with Kevin Lingenfelser taking over for subsequent episodes . VFX producer Andrea D 'Amico joined the team at FuseFX to work on the series in December 2015 . Two separate production management and creative teams were established to work on the show , and producers , composers and various artists were able to alternate episodes . This was important because most of the episodes had to be worked on concurrently , either two or three at a time . Typical effects for the series include the creation of character @-@ driving effects animation , photo @-@ realistic vehicles , CG set extensions , pyrotechnics , and atmospheric effects .

=== Music ===

Bear McCreary confirmed that he would compose music for the series in July 2013 . Unlike on some of his previous scores , ABC and Marvel allowed McCreary to work with a full symphonic orchestra , typically featuring 50 or 70 players . Complex synthesizer programming was also used , to give the score " a modern edge " . McCreary composes on average 30 minutes of music per episode . Creating the main theme for the series , which McCreary also saw as Coulson 's theme , was a process which took a lot of collaboration with the executive producers , who wanted a specific sound ? " something big , that ... belonged in the Marvel Cinematic Universe " but also " intimate because these aren 't superheroes , these are regular people . " McCreary had to work harder to make the theme heard , given that the show does not have a traditional title sequence . In September 2014 , McCreary announced that there were plans for an Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. soundtrack , which was released digitally a year later by Marvel Music on September 4 , 2015 , and

on CD on October 9 . Featuring music from the first two seasons , the soundtrack was written and produced by McCreary and Steven Kablan , with the album produced by Joe Augustine with McCreary .

All music composed by Bear McCreary . Notes next to each track indicate which episode (s) it was featured in .

= = = Marvel Cinematic Universe tie @-@ ins = = =

In July 2013 , Jed Whedon said the series would work in tandem with the Marvel films , both past and upcoming , to weave in between the films , and to " try to make them more rewarding on both ends . " In March 2014 , Bell stated at the show 's PaleyFest panel that the producers and the writers are able to read the screenplays for upcoming MCU films to know where the universe is heading , which allowed them to form a general plan for the show through the end of a third season . Elaborating on where the series is allowed to go , Bell later pointed out that there are not many superheroes in the MCU films , so the series cannot introduce new superheroes and abilities every episode in that universe or " suddenly [Avengers : Age of Ultron] is a very different movie . "

Jed Whedon explained that each Marvel project is intended to standalone first before there is any interweaving , and noted that the series has to work with the film division and be aware of their plans so as not to interfere when introducing someone or something to the universe . Bell elaborated that this was preferable so that people who do not watch the films can still follow the series , and vice versa . He stated that " ABC and Marvel both want the series to be able to make sense on its own " , but that it was beneficial for the films to have the series fill in any " gaps " for them , due to having to be " big " and moving " quickly through a lot of huge pieces " , unlike television which has time to deal with more nuances . In January 2016 , Joss Whedon noted that this process " unfortunately just means the TV show gets , you know , leftovers . " He stated that , for example , the series ' creative team initially wanted to use Loki 's scepter from The Avengers but were unable due to Whedon 's plans for it in Age of Ultron .

The series ' first tie @-@ in episode with the Marvel Cinematic Universe is " The Well " , which takes place after the events of Thor : The Dark World . Another tie @-@ in takes place in the episodes " End of the Beginning " and " Turn , Turn , Turn " , which revolve around the events of Captain America : The Winter Soldier . This led to a retooling of the series . Flashback sequences in " Shadows " and " The Things We Bury " featuring Hayley Atwell as Peggy Carter tie into the Agent Carter television series . The events of " The Frenemy of My Enemy " and " The Dirty Half Dozen " lead up to the opening sequence of Avengers : Age of Ultron , while " Scars " deals with the aftermath of that film . The third season follows similar themes to the film Captain America : Civil War , focusing on powered people and the different responses to them , leading up to the episode " Emancipation " , which takes place after the film and shows how its events affect the series ' powered characters .

The episode " T.A.H.I.T.I. " introduces the Kree alien race to the MCU , members of which play a significant role in Guardians of the Galaxy . This begins a storyline that recurs throughout the series , and introduces Inhumans to the MCU , with Jed Whedon saying that it was something " in the works " for a long time , as Marvel Studios has plans for an Inhumans film , and this would be " one of the first instances where we get to start planting the seeds on the show before the film . " Gregg noted in January 2016 that the " writer and director [of the Inhumans film] will have free rein to do what they want to do with the Inhumans , but hopefully there 'll be some way that our Inhumans connect to that . " The third season introduces the concept of the Secret Warriors , with new Inhuman characters inspired by the comic of the same name , while also retconing the history of Hydra in the MCU , tying it into the Inhumans storyline . Additionally , the season introduces the concept of Life Model Decoys .

= = Release = =

= = = Broadcast = = =

Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. airs in the United States on ABC , and has been licensed in 155 countries and territories . For its first season , the series aired on Tuesdays at 8 pm EST . Starting with the second season , Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. aired on Tuesdays at 9 pm EST . For its fourth season , the series will move to the 10 pm time slot on Tuesdays . MyNetworkTV was awarded the syndication rights to the series , to begin broadcasting it in September 2016 .

CTV announced in June 2013 that they hold the broadcast rights for Canada . That August , it was confirmed that Channel 4 would air the series in the United Kingdom , which they did for the first two seasons before it moved to E4 for the third . In Australia , the series aired on Seven Network for the first two seasons , before moving to Fox8 starting with the third . In New Zealand , the show airs on TV2 .

For the second and third seasons , the series broadcast each season in two blocks , with a season of Agent Carter airing in between . Bell explained that this decision was made following the challenge of producing 22 episodes for the first season to be aired over 36 ? 40 weeks , which meant having repeats and " losing momentum " . Instead , Agent Carter took up much of that gap in a row , leaving the back half of Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. ' s season to run uninterrupted . This format allows the producers and writers to approach each season in two parts , each with distinct stories connected by carried @-@ over elements .

= = = Marketing = = =

Social media accounts for the series were set up in January 2013 , months before ABC officially ordered it , " a rarity for a pilot " . By May 17 , 2013 , Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. was the top new show of the television season in terms of social media activity , with the series ' official Twitter account having over 46 @, @ 000 followers and its official Facebook page having close to half a million likes . Many cast and crew members " live tweet " each episode , with J. August Richards noting that this brings instant feedback from viewers , and allows the crew to " watch the audience take that journey " in real time .

For the final six episodes of the first season , Marvel began the " Marvel ? s Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. : The Art of Level Seven " initiative , in which a different image was released each Thursday before a new episode , depicting a first look at a key event from the upcoming episode . Bell stated that the initiative was a way to tie the series back to its comics roots , and was thought of at the beginning of the first season . The production team tried to pair specific artists to the teaser posters based on their previous work and how it connected to the themes and emotion of the intended episode . For the second season , the series returned as " The Art of Evolution " , with an image for each of the final twelve episodes of the season .

At San Diego Comic @-@ Con 2014 , Marvel Custom Solutions and Lexus released a limited single @-@ issue comic tie @-@ in titled Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. : The Chase , set between the Season 1 episodes " Seeds " and " T.R.A.C.K.S. " The comic was written by George Kitson , with art by Mirko Colak , Neil Edwards , and Mirco Pierfederici .

A five @-@ part web series titled Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. : Double Agent , also sponsored by Lexus , was released from March 4 to May 6 , 2015 on ABC.com. The web series follows a newly hired Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. production assistant , who acts as a double agent for the " Mastermind " , portrayed by Stan Lee . Cast and crew members from the series , such as Gregg , also appear , with viewers having the ability to vote in an online poll after each episode to guess where the double agent would go in the next episode ; votes entered viewers in a drawing to win prizes from the set of Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. Double Agent was nominated for Outstanding Digital Series at the 27th Producers Guild Awards . Another Lexus @-@ sponsored five @-@ part web series , Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. : Academy , released from March 9 to May 4 , 2016 . In Academy , three Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. fans compete to play an agent in that series . Members of the Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. cast also appear . All three fans ultimately made cameo appearances in the third season finale .

== Home media ==

The complete first season was first released on Blu-ray and DVD on September 9, 2014, with the complete second season released on September 18, 2015, as an Amazon.com exclusive. On Netflix, the first season became available for streaming on November 20, 2014, the second season on June 11, 2015, and the third season on June 16, 2016.

== Reception ==

== Ratings ==

In the United States, the premiere episode of Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. earned a 4.7 / 14 rating in the 18- to 49-year-old demographic, with 12.12 million total viewers, making it the biggest network drama debut in four years. Though the series debuted to strong ratings against its competition, NCIS, its ratings declined considerably over the following two months, though it remained Tuesday's top show among men 18–49, and overall was the No. 3 show among upscale young adults behind Modern Family and The Big Bang Theory. It also enjoyed DVR recordings that, according to TV Guide, were "through the roof".

In March 2016, Alisha Grauso of Forbes discussed the series and its ratings, describing the show as having "never quite been the ratings hit for ABC that the network had hoped it would be ... It's hard enough to write a film script that fits within the continuity of the larger Marvel Cinematic Universe, even harder to do it with a full-length TV season that must act as connective tissue to the larger world while still being its own thing." Grauso opined that the series' ratings may improve if it either focused on trying to be the best series it could be (with less connections to the films, like the Marvel Netflix shows) or on just being "support and tie-in to the world of the Avengers". The end result for either scenario, Grauso concluded, "Is that, hopefully, ratings move up and stay up. In the first case, fans might be lost by the disconnect from the MCU, but a stronger storyline and more consistent writing would bring them and new fans back. In the second scenario, fans would tune in every week for fear of missing out on a bit of story that's important to the larger world."

== Critical response ==

The review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes reported an 86% approval rating with an average rating of 8 out of 10 based on 43 reviews for the first season. The website's consensus reads, "Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. is sure to please comic book fans, but the strong ensemble and brisk pacing help to make this better than average superhero show accessible to non-fanboys as well." Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned a score of 74 out of 100 based on 33 reviews, indicating "generally favorable reviews." The second season received more positive critical reception than the first season, and scored a 94% approval rating with an average score of 7.2 out of 10 on Rotten Tomatoes, based on 17 reviews. The website's consensus reads, "Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. relaxes into itself during its sophomore season, mitigating the show's growing pains by focusing on characters while amping up narrative thrills." The third season has a 100% approval rating with an average score of 8.2 out of 10 on Rotten Tomatoes, based on 12 reviews. The website's consensus reads, "Still evolving in its third season, Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. further hits its stride with a blend of thrills, humor, and heart."

== Analysis ==

The way that the series is affected by the events of Captain America: The Winter Soldier has been called "miraculous", with Terri Schwartz at Zap2it writing "the fact that the movie so influenced the

show is game @-@ changing in terms of how the mediums of film and television can be interwoven " , while Mary McNamara of the Los Angeles Times stated that Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. " faces a future of perpetual re @-@ invention , and that puts it in the exhilarating first car of television 's roller @-@ coaster ride toward possible world domination . " The fact that the series also depicts the rebuilding of S.H.I.E.L.D. in the MCU has also been highlighted , with Merrill Barr , reviewing " Beginning of the End " for Forbes , saying " what Marvel ? s daring to say with this season finale is ' everything we do matters , and you need to pay attention to all of it . ' "

The series ' introduction of the Inhumans was seen by Oliver Sava of The A.V. Club as making Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. an essential part of the MCU and Marvel Studios ' plans , with the connections between the series and the films previously having always been reactive on the series ' behalf , with " stuff " happening in the films , and Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. dealing with the fallout of it . However , the series would now be " making things happen , and these events will clearly impact the future of the MCU " . Barr wrote that the series " does a most excellent job of standing on its own two feet in a way we ? ve never seen it do before . Come the final frame [of the second season finale] , all anyone ? Marvel fan or otherwise ? will be asking is when season three begins . "

The third season 's paralleling of themes from Captain America : Civil War was called " topical and relevant " and " downright eerie " by The A.V. Club 's Alex McCown and Screen Crush 's Kevin Fitzpatrick . McCown compared the series ' approach to setting up " a world distrustful of superpowers " to the real life events surrounding Cliven Bundy and Donald Trump 's 2016 presidential campaign , and said that " S.H.I.E.L.D. is taking full advantage of its medium in order to tell the story the upcoming Captain America film can ? t : A full and fraught exploration of the need to protect freedom and privacy , even for those with extraordinary abilities . " Fitzpatrick added that this " topical bent ... made for a great angle to build up that world mentality without feeling particularly subservient to the movies . "

= = = Accolades = = =

The Atlantic named " 4 @, @ 722 Hours " one of the best television episodes of 2015 .

= = Potential spin @-@ off = =

By April 2015 , Marvel was developing a spin @-@ off series of Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. The series , which was being developed by Bell and writer Paul Zbyszewski , would be based on storylines occurring at the end of the second season of Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. , and would receive its own pilot rather than a backdoor pilot . Though Palicki and Blood were reportedly in final discussions to headline the potential new series , ABC passed on the project by May 7 , 2015 , when they announced their series renewals and cancellations , and new series pickups .

In August 2015 , the spin @-@ off series received new life as a reworked series , titled Marvel 's Most Wanted , with a pilot order . Bell and Zbyszewski once again developed the series , while also serving as co @-@ writers of the pilot , executive producers , and showrunners , with Jeph Loeb also attached as executive producer . The series would still focus on Morse and Hunter , with Palicki and Blood both attached , and was described as " a new take focusing on the same duo and their continuing adventures . "

Bell and Zbyszewski worked together on the characters ' storyline for the third season of Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. , preparing them to move over to the spin @-@ off , with Bell explaining that it would set up Most Wanted by defining exactly who the characters are , such as Hunter and his lack of loyalty to S.H.I.E.L.D. and to ideologies ? " nothing specific about the show , it ? s just who Hunter is . " In March 2016 , Bell stated that while Hunter and Morse are " on S.H.I.E.L.D. , we want to take advantage of who they are , and give the audience as much of their relationship with one another , and with other people , as possible . We are aware that there is a potential imminent end , and so they won ? t be neglected . "

Hunter and Morse are written off the series in the episode " Parting Shot " , both leaving S.H.I.E.L.D. , as Palicki and Blood " physically had to go leave to shoot the pilot they had to stop

being on S.H.I.E.L.D. and get ready for the pilot and then shoot the pilot and all of that , so it didn 't make sense for us to have all these episodes with them and then not have them in two or three episodes , and then go , ' Oh , we were just over here , ' and then come back and go away again . " On whether they could return to the series at some point , Bell said , " I can 't answer that , but I can say it would be kind of cheating to make Mack cry like that [in the episode] only to buy it back ? not that we haven 't brought characters back from the dead . We want to earn stuff . " In May 2016 , the spin @-@ off series was passed on by ABC once again .

= = Other media = =

At the 2014 San Diego Comic Con International , Marvel Comics announced an ongoing series titled S.H.I.E.L.D. , to be set in the mainstream Marvel Universe and written by Mark Waid , beginning December 2014 . Featuring art by a rotating group of artists including Carlos Pacheco , Alan Davis , and Chris Sprouse , the series is led by Agent Phil Coulson , and sees the canonical introduction of the characters Melinda May , Jemma Simmons , and Leo Fitz ? who originated from the television series ? to the Marvel comics universe , who Waid noted would be given " the Marvel Universe spin . " Waid described the series as " done @-@ in @-@ one . Coulson and his team have a mission , and if we need someone for a mission , everyone in the Marvel Universe is available as a potential Agent . " Waid added that though the comic does not share events with the television series , it will maintain the characters ' relationships and personalities . Marc Guggenheim relaunched the comic as Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. for Marvel Comics ' All @-@ New , All @-@ Different Marvel line , and introduced the television series ' character Grant Ward to the Marvel comic universe in May 2016 .

In September 2015 , it was announced that Phil Coulson , Daisy Johnson / Quake , Deathlok , Melinda May , Bobbi Morse , Lincoln Campbell , Sif , Raina and Gordon would appear in the Marvel Future Fight mobile role @-@ playing video game . Their inclusion in the game was done to promote the start of the third season , as well as to allow Marvel to " extend storylines and build on backstories to engage fans in a brand @-@ new experience , " according to Marvel Games creative director Bill Rosemann . In March 2016 , De Caestecker and Henstridge reprised their roles as Fitz and Simmons , respectively , in the episode " Lizards " , of the animated series Ultimate Spider @-@ Man vs the Sinister 6 . In the episode , Fitz and Simmons run a course that the series ' main characters take . Also in the month , Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. downloadable content was revealed for Lego Marvel 's Avengers . The content consisted of a mission based " on the events leading up to the season two finale " , which involved facing Jiaying and Daisy in Afterlife while rescuing agents , as well as going up against Gordon and Cal Johnson who have occupied the S.H.I.E.L.D. Helicarrier . The content includes the playable characters Daisy Johnson , Leo Fitz , Agent Koenig , Melinda May , Bobbi Morse , Jemma Simmons , Cal Johnson / Mr. Hyde , Deathlok , Gordon , Grant Ward , Jiaying , Lincoln , and Raina , as well as the airplane ' The Bus ' . Ming @-@ Na Wen reprised her role as Melinda May to provide new dialogue for the content .