

Call Answered: Karen Strassman: Actress & Voiceover Artist

[Adam Rothenberg](#) Apr 12

Karen Strassman is a multi-dimensional actress and voiceover artist. Film, Television, Theatre, Cartoons, and Video Games, Karen has done it all, including spending half her life acting in France.

You would know Karen from her guest starring roles on *Preacher*, *Weeds*, *Private Practice*, *Criminal Minds*, *Days of Our Lives*, *Desperate Housewives*, *The Young and The Restless*, *Gilmore Girls* and many others. Karen can currently be seen in the recurring guest starring role on Amazon Prime's *BOSCH* as "D.D.A. Laura Tribe." Season 5 drops on 4/19.

For more on Karen visit <https://www.karenstrassman.com> and follow her on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)!



1. Who or what inspired you to become an actress? I've always wanted to be an actress. Growing up, I never encountered anyone who was an actor or in the industry. It was as if I was born with that yearning to express myself creatively in that way. I've always loved acting, enjoyed creating plays in our basement, and being in those early school plays. I dreamed of being in movies and TV ever since I can remember. So really a case of "nature" as opposed to "nurture." Since I had little information about the business, it felt

like an inaccessible, intangible fantasy-dream that my parents probably kept hoping I would grow out of, but never did.

When I was 13, I was cast in the role of Helen Keller in a beautiful production of *The Miracle Worker*. I couldn't wait to get to the theatre after school for rehearsals.

I became the character slowly and blindfolded myself for hours on end, spending any extra time trying to find my way around the theatre or my home without sight, envisioning what it was like to be blind and deaf. The entire experience was magical, while on stage it felt as if the world opened up in my heart and time stood still. I believe it was then that I fell irreversibly in love with acting and storytelling and the empathetic nature of this art. However, during that time I didn't think I was pretty enough or talented enough to pursue acting as a career, so I pursued studies in psychology. It wasn't until I moved to France at 20 years old that I realized my passion could become a career, and I've been making my living doing what I love ever since.

So, if anyone inspired me to be an actor, I would say in a way, Helen Keller. Her spirit will always be a mentor and a teacher to me in a way.

2. You are about to have a recurring role on Amazon Prime's hit show *BOSCH* as "D.D.A. Laura Tribe." What attracted you to this show? One of the things I love about *BOSCH* is the show's complete dedication to making sure everything is entirely realistic. They have authentic detectives, police, and forensic consultants, for example, on set to make sure it's all copacetic and completely plausible with how these things could happen in real life. *BOSCH* is shot in real local restaurants, stores, coffee shops, and other existing locals, which give it such a completely authentic, feel and flavor so much attention to detail in this way. I also believe Titus

Welliver carries the show with such a seemingly effortless strength and presence. He sets the tone for the show both on and off screen.

3. What did you enjoy most about filming it? The days I shot a deputy attorney was on set. I had the opportunity to talk with her regarding any advice for my role as a character. People in this field who are working to bring justice to victims, and justice to criminals who wronged them fascinate me, and I feel I have so much to learn from their life experiences.

4. Of the shows you have guest starred on, which one did you wish could have been turned into a series regular and why? I

enjoyed playing "Dr. Lois Slotnick" in *Preacher*. Exploring this character and bringing her to life in an expanded storyline would be really compelling. Although, she is a broad character like many on this comic book-based series. I wanted to follow the lead of all the other wonderful actors in this series and make her as human and complex as possible. I created an entire backstory for her, where she came from and why she was working for The Grail, etc. It would have been a delight to let all of these things unfold and spend more time with all the crazy-talented people involved in this cool series.

Also, I would have enjoyed another season playing "Jolene Waite" in *Weeds*. She was a quirky and fun character. The atmosphere on this production was a hit. I remember one night running overtime. Around 2:30 AM Kevin Nealon brought out his banjo between takes and started improvising songs about different cast and crew members on set (he sang the song "Jolene" for me). A producer came over to apologize to a number of us for running so late. I remember thinking, "Are you kidding, I hope this day never ends!" Like a number of other wonderful shows I've been lucky enough to be a part of, I just never wanted to leave set. After seven seasons, they invited me to

be part of Season 8 and I was beyond excited. A few weeks before they started shooting again, one of the producers called my agent personally to say how much they liked working with me, but that sadly they had so many things to wrap up in the final season that they had to cut some extra storylines out, which included mine. It was really kind of her to make this call personally. Changes happen often all the time in our business. Over the years, you eventually get used to all this ups and downs. If you love it, hang on for the crazy ride and stay grateful for all the really cool stuff.



Karen Strassman as "Dr. Lois Slotnick" on "The Preacher"

5. Which character that you have played is least like you? What makes you so different from them? The character I'm playing for Tom Six's upcoming film in *The Onania Club*. When cast, I couldn't imagine how anyone could do what she does. It made my physically sick to think of. I had to explore my own shadow to get in touch with the dark, wounded, angry sadistic parts of humanity inside myself to connect to where she was

coming from. But I will say it's really important and even healthy to explore one's own shadow. It makes you a more honest human being and artist. We are terrified of our own shadow, but also fascinated by it.

6. In addition to being an on-camera actress, you are also a successful voice-over artist. What made you want to get into the voice-over world? Actually, the voiceover world was an accident. While in Paris, I had worked as a dialect coach and studying French theatre. I got a job doing voices for a cassette tape that accompanied a magazine called *Hi Kids* created as a fun way to help French kids to learn English. Every week we went to the studio to record and they pitched countless characters at me to voice: Pocahontas, Lady Godiva, a pirate girl, a dying old Irish lady, little girls, little boys, speaking monkeys, pigs. Then I started dubbing French films in English. I was the voice for Juliette Binoche, Vanessa Paradis, Virginie Ledoyen and many young French stars at that time. It turned out I was good at all this, and then I started getting jobs doing the English voices for cartoons, video games, and French commercials. I was one of the American voices for Air France at the time and was the American voice for guided tours of the Louvre, the Musee d'Orsay.

7. Do you prepare differently for an on-screen role as opposed to a voice-over? If so, what are your different routines for preparation? When doing a voiceover, no need to learn lines or worry about what you look like. For both mediums you have to place yourself into the ideal imaginary circumstances that your character experiences and go there in your heart and spirit to make either medium come to life. It's also important to know what your character serves in the overall storytelling of any given project so that you can best serve the project itself. I also always make sure to look for the fun, even if it is a heavy or challenging project. If the audience feels me having fun as a creative artist, they will come along with me for the ride and be somehow touched effected by it.





Karen Strassman, Photo Credit: Birdie Thompson, Hair and Makeup: Allison Noelle, Clothing: Pinup Girl

8. You have also worked/studied in France for part of your life. What is the biggest difference you have noticed between acting in France and acting here in the states? With brilliant intuitive actors, there is no difference. Isabelle Huppert, Melanie Laurent, Juliette Binoche, Marion Cotillard, Vincent Cassell, Jean Reno, and Mathieu Kassovitz are all a case in point.

9. Since you are fluent in French...what is your favorite French expression? What is your favorite English expression?

French:

- C'est un peu tirer par les cheveux
- J'étais au cinema
- C'est vraiment enculer les puces
- Je t'aime.

...to name a few

English:

- Letmedoitagain. (used as one word when in the recording booth).

...and most everything else just sounds better in French 😊

10. Rapid Fire Questions:

- **Coke or Pepsi?** Reed's Ginger Ale
- **City or Country?** I need both to stay sane. If I spent more time in the country than I actually do now, I would probably be way more sane and a better artist as well.
- **Coffee or Tea?** Coffeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!!!
- **Favorite go to Emoji when texting?** 🌹



More on Karen:

Karen Strassman is an actress, voice-over artist and dialect coach, known the world over for hundreds of characters she has created in many forms. She enjoys crafting characters that touch the human spirit and mirror the beauty, quirkiness, challenging realities and exquisiteness of the world we live in.

Whether on-camera or behind a mic, Karen is extremely versatile. Recently seen as the devious German scientist on *PREACHER*, the unscrupulous & calculating lawyer on *SILICON VALLEY* and the overburdened French military mechanic "Maria Laurent" in *WOLFENSTEIN II*. She is known for creating unique and powerful characters. She has played roles as varied as the brilliant and empathic scientist "Devra Bogdanovich" in *INGRESS*, a dying immigrant from Northern Ireland, doctors and lawyers, the quirky bookish OCD accountant on *WEEDS*, to a killer's trailer trash mother on *CRIMINAL MINDS*. Upcoming roles include an appearance on *S.W.A.T.*, a recurring role as the driven public defender "Laura Tribe" on *BOSCH* and a lead in the long awaited release of Director Tom Six's highly anticipated daring movie, *THE ONANIA CLUB*.

Karen has created hundreds of voice-over characters of all shapes, sizes, genders, ages, and species, from classic Disney princesses, to iconic villainesses, to talking jellyfish and shy tadpoles. Her extensive range of characters spans the voiceover world of cartoons, animation and video games; from the teenage rockstar "Catty Noire" on *MONSTER HIGH*, the beloved little girl "Olivia" on *LEGO FRIENDS*, sexy "Rouge the Bat" in *SONIC THE HEDGEHOG*, "Chromie," the charismatic gnome that turns into a dragon from *WORLD OF WARCRAFT* and *HEROES OF THE STORM*, to the iconic "Mileena" & "Kitana" in *MORTAL KOMBAT*. And then there are projects like the Nicktoons series, *MONSUNO*, voiced by an ensemble cast of five actors, where Karen not only played the teenage female lead, "Jinja," but she also voiced every other female character in all three seasons of the show (last count there were 26 characters).

Karen has dual American/French nationality. She spent almost half her life in France and is fluent in French (although she's also worked in German, Spanish, Danish, Italian and Yucatec!). In France, Karen studied acting at the prestigious Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique in Paris,

and also began her dialect coaching career there, teaching classes at the well-known STUDIO VO/VF and coaching famous French actors in their homes and on-set. She soon got into TV, film & voiceover, and continued to dive into as much theatre as she could, both in English and in French.

On-camera in France, Karen has shot films in all kinds of locations throughout Europe, from many artsy little indie projects, as well as big productions, working with icons like Gerard Depardieu, Jan Kounen, Polanski and Merchant & Ivory. She also appeared in many of the popular French TV series at that time.

Her major clients have included: Disney, HBO, Sony, Universal Pictures, Warner Brothers, Microsoft, Nickelodeon, Nicktoons, Cartoon Network, Sci-Fi, Showtime, The CW, CBS, Hulu, Amazon Prime, AMC, Netflix, Klasky-Csupo, Viacom, THQ, Bandai, Atlus, Volition, Namco, Pioneer, Konami, Vivendi, VU Games, Square Enix Co, Blizzard, Electronic Arts, Ubisoft, Technicolor, Disneyland, Lancôme, L'Oréal, Clarins, Vidal Sassoon, Acura, Kia, Hallmark, Mattel and Diet Coke.