

# Our exclusive chat with Karen Strassman

[Giselle](#) October 28, 2019



Karen Strassman's acting career has brought her into your television, video games and even Disneyland! We got the chance to chat with her on it all.

## **What was your experience working opposite David Arquette in Creepshow?**

David is so completely real and down to earth. If you watch him in interviews, you'll see his completely refreshing candor. He's so playful and up for anything extremely easy and so much fun to work with him.

## **Bosch and Preacher are such hit shows! Congratulations on your**

## **recurring roles. Do you ever create background stories for your characters?**

Thank you, and yes I did! When I shot Bosch, they actually had a DA from the police department on set, and I got to talk to her about what a professional in my position would do. It was really helpful and greatly informed how I approached playing D.D.A. Laura Tribe. Since Preacher is a series based on comic books as an actor, there is always a danger of playing these sorts of comic characters too broad, it was really important for me to create a whole back-story for Dr Lois Slotnick. One of the things I love so much about this show is that all of the characters, no matter how far-fetched they are, actually seem so very real and humanly relatable. The actors all do such a good job that you forget that they are comic book characters after a while because they feel so human and real. Creating a back-story really helped me figure out what was driving Dr Slotnick, why she was doing what she does and the vulnerable human aspects of her life. From this that lead her to where she is in the story, so that I could match the sense of comic book reality that the other actors in the show achieve so beautifully.

## **What are some things you wish more people knew about being a voice-over actor?**

People often think if you have a "great voice," you can do voiceover, or that creating a cartoon character is simply "doing a voice." One the the most important things about voice-over is that first and foremost it is ACTING, not just "doing a voice," so acting training is paramount.

## **What advice would you give to someone who wants to be a voice-over actor?**

When people ask me how they can become a voice-actor, the first thing I tell them is to take acting classes and do lots of theatre.

## **How does being an actor for video games compare to television?**

Shooting for TV you are on a set surrounded by dozens and dozens of people who are each responsible for playing a part in making the atmosphere (the location, decor, props, lighting costumes, make-up, etc) all come to life. If your scene is in a courtroom, you are in a courtroom, if your scene is in a bar, you are in a bar, if you are in a forest, you will be shooting in a forest... And there are other actors there, who you can look in the eyes, and feel and react to everything that is going on with them. Voicing video games you are in a studio alone with the voice director, the engineer, a handful of clients sometimes and a screen or a pile of pages with all your lines written on them. You have to IMAGINE everything else... When doing motion capture for video games, you are wearing a black suit with all kinds of equipment strapped to you, like a mic, and a camera secured on your head pointing at your face. There are blocks of wood and taped marks on the floor where you have to stand and imagine that you are in a bar or a forest. I think Mocap is one of the most challenging kinds of acting because it demands such a high level of imagination in some ways... not only do you have to completely imagine absolutely everything, but you have to do it while pretending you don't have a heavy camera strapped to your face and that the other actors don't either. You have to be able to imagine that a wooden block is a seat in a rocket ship, or a piece of wood in your hand is a high caliber weapon. It's a lot like when you were a kid in your back yard hiding behind a tree with a long branch in your hand imagining you are a knight with a sword hiding behind the doorway in a castle.

## **How do you maintain your voice to be in tip-top shape?**

I don't do a very good job of this! The voice is a muscle and like a lot of other muscles in the body, the best ways to take care of it are to get a lot of extra sleep to help it repair for all the over use. You also need to take days of rest where you don't use it... Im pretty bad with these because I love

working and am a workaholic. However, I do vocal warm-ups before and during sessions, I am careful to avoid certain foods that aren't good for the voice, and I also stretch and exercise my body everyday, which also makes a big difference for me on the quality of the voice.

### **What work have you done for Disneyland Paris?**

I did a bunch of voiceover commercials for them in the 80's and 90's, and I also did an on-camera commercial for them in the early 90's when they first opened up space mountain. We shot it from midnight to 6am when the park was closed. It was in the middle of winter and they dressed us in summer clothes. We road that roller coaster over and over and over that night until 6am in freezing temperatures. One could say they didn't take very good care of their actors that night... and I ended up getting pneumonia from the experience. Sometimes show biz isn't as glamorous as it's cracked up to be!

### **How did you become a dialect coach?**

When I was a student in France, I got an internship at a well-known studio in Paris that trained French actors to act in English because of all the movies and TV that shoot there in English. It turns out I had a natural proclivity for dialects and coaching. That following year, they offered me a job as one of their main dialect coaches. I coached there then they sent me to famous actors home to prepare them for movie roles in English. I also coached on the sets of different movies and TV shows. I became more and more passionate about learning and coaching different accents, and I have been doing it ever since.

*Credits:*

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