

Interview with talented actress & voiceover star Karen Strassman - naludamagazine.com

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Check our interview with talented actress, voiceover artist and dialect coach Karen Strassman who was most recently seen with in the recurring guest role of "Dr. Slotnick" on the hit AMC series Preacher. She can also be seen as a recurring role of D.D.A Laura Tribe in Amazon Prime's hit series Bosch.

Hi Karen, please tell us a little about you?

I am an actress (film, TV and theater), voice-over artist, and a dialect/acting and V.O. coach. I also cast and direct voice-over projects on the side. Basically I get to spend my life doing what I love and playing in some pretty cool sandboxes with a lot of talented and inspiring people.

Describe yourself in 3 words?

Passionate, empathic, and adventurous

Name one your strengths?

I'm a really hard worker.

How's a typical day in your life?

Every day is completely different, but here is a sample of what a day might look like.

7am Wake up, drink lemon water and then some coffee

8am Hit the swimming pool and then workout and stretch in the gym if there's time, or if I have lines to learn, I might spend some time on the treadmill working on them.

10am Back home to work with a client I'm coaching for accent reduction

11am Coach another client who called me to help her prep an on-camera audition for a network tv show.

12pm Get dressed, do hair and make up for an on-camera audition I have across town.

1:30pm TV on-camera audition

2pm Eat something while I'm driving

2:30pm Arrive at DPT, my V.O. agency, to read some auditions in their booth.

4pm A 2 hour video-game session

6:30pm Grab a bite to eat

7:30pm Either go to an acting class or a rehearsal

10:30pm Come home, try to catch up on emails and things like that and prepare for the next day....

12am Crash.

Who is your biggest supporter?

I have some amazing friends who have seen me at my best and at my god-awful worst. They love me pretty darn unconditionally thru thick and thin, as I do them. Together, we help keep everything in perspective, and still push each other to be the very best we can on this crazy ride on this little ball spinning thru space.

How did you get started in the industry?

I've been passionate about acting since I was a kid, but I actually got started acting professionally in France. I got a job as a dialect coach when I was 20 years old, coaching French actors to prep their English speaking roles for TV and film and working on set. That soon led to a TV role, and then an agent... and I got into Le Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique (CNSAD), the most renowned theater school in France, where they PAY you to study if you get in. I studied theater in French, Racine, Moliere Beckett, and even Shakespeare in French! I also trained skills there such as fencing, stage combat and horseback riding. During this time I started dubbing major French films into English, which led to work in animation, videogames, narration and international commercials. And thus began a bi-lingual acting career, across the oceans in France. I lived and thrived there as a working actress for 16 years, traveling all over Europe with different projects, until one day I decided it was time to come back to the states to work in the

American market.

What was your first acting role?

Queen Elizabeth in a 3rd grade play where I wrote a little song that the whole class sang in the play.

My first <memorable> role was as Helen Keller in The Miracle Worker, where I fell forever in love with acting.

Do you have or had acting classes?

I've been taking acting classes since I was a kid and continue to take them even now. Just as a dancer needs to hit the ballet studio and do their barre exercises, I feel like it's really important for an actor to have a class where they can work out and really explore a role without having the same result-oriented pressure that one ultimately has on set or in an audition circumstance. I also think being in class myself makes me a much better and honest coach for the actors that come to me for training.

Right now I study with Robert Colt (robertcolt.com) who affectionately calls his class.... "The Art of Not Acting," where we are encouraged to let go of all "technique", ideas and preconceptions about a given scene or character which trains you to become as truthful as possible in the explorations of each present moment, which is the most alive and thrilling place for any actor or artist to be.

What is the best and worst part of being an actress?

The best part is the creative high when you are surfing the magic of uncharted territory in each present moment with another actor who is willing to drop in and really go there too. It's like flying without a net and somewhere between jumping out of a plane and falling in love. It's

exhilarating, terrifying, raw and thrilling.

The worst part is when you leave an audition realizing you didn't have the guts to do the above and you're either "acting" or phoning it in, and you KNOW it. That feeling when you leave, knowing you completely missed an opportunity to make magic and that you probably stunk up the room a bit... Then you have to take a rational look at what happened, what you can learn about it, and let it go.

Another thing is when you have invested so much of yourself into a character, hours and hours of work and you have fallen in love with a character, a script, a project... and you get pinned and so close to booking it.... and you get that call saying they went another way.

The last thing is the crazy scheduling. It's a misconception that you can make your own schedule as an actor. Everything happens at the last minute in this business, and I am constantly having to move my schedule around to accommodate last minute auditions, bookings and coaching sessions. Constantly having to apologize to my friends and family and other employers for schedule changes. Once I had to cancel a dentist appointment 7 times before finally making it into the office for a simple check up!

How do you balance your personal life with your acting life?

It's very difficult (as illustrated above) but I will say that most of my friends family and dear ones all understand at this point, and are, for the most part, very understanding and supportive. Acting is my passion, my love, my joy, and deep fulfillment. If I had to choose between going to a party and being on set, I would choose being on set. If I had to choose between going on vacation or being on set, I would choose being on set. So many of my friends are in the business too, my personal life and acting life are often very

meshed together.

Best advice ever given?

All there is, is now. (the past and future don't really exist and will take you away from the moment).

Invest completely in each present moment.

Real Life (and possibly real art as well) happens only when you give yourself completely to each present moment without any preconceived ideas, manipulation or cons.

There are many versions of this idea, and the 3 people how have communicated it the most impactfully to me in their own way are Darrell Calkins (CobaltSaffron.com) Robert Colt (RobertColt.com), and Mahendra Trivedi (trivedieffect.com)

How do you prepare for a role?

Depends completely different each time. For Lois Slotnick in Preacher, I worked a lot on her accent and made up a back-story that would help make everything she says and does feel very real and grounded to me. For my role in Bosch, DDA Laura Tribe, I got to talk to a real life DA and ask how she would have handled the cat I was dealing with in the show. For Silicon Valley, I worked the lines backwards and forwards, up and down, as the wring was very specific, and I wanted to act as natural and have a much freedom with it as possible once I got on set. In all cases, I watch as much of the show as I can if it's already on the air, to get a sense of tone, pacing, etc. Or I'll watch some of the director's work so I get a sense of his/her style.

Now tell us about your work in hit AMC series "Preacher?"

I play Dr Lois Slotnick, a passionate, highly intelligent scientist. Perhaps even a freak of nature... She works for the Grail, and is obsessed with creating a DNA cocktail that will help put Genesis, the voice of God that has been residing in Jesse, the Preacher, in its "rightful place" in the "real" Messiah... She really wants to please The Allfather.

And about your role as D.D.A Laura Tribe in Amazon Prime's hit series Bosch?

One of the things I love about BOSCH is the show's complete dedication to making sure everything is entirely realistic. They have real detectives, police and forensic consultants, for example, on set to make sure it's all copasetic 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 think that Titus Welliver carries the show with such a seemingly effortless strength and presence. He sets the tone for the whole show both on screen and off. Hard to stop watching once you start...

The days I shot they had a real deputy attorney on set and I got to talk to her about how she would handle the situations my character was in, and what she would do if it was her. 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.

What other projects you have been part of?

I recently just shot a role in a pilot, and a tv horror/thriller. I shot a lead role in the new Tom Six movie, The Onania Club, that will be coming out later this year, and I play Annette Birkin in the newly released Resident Evil 2.

What kind of roles do you like or would like to play and why?

Women faced with challenges and forced to grow through dealing with them, troubled women walking the edge of sanity, facing physical adversity, handicaps, alcohol drug addiction, insanity or obsessions. Roles where I get to explore my shadow, because in real life we spend so much time repressing our shadow, and I think it is healthy, real and human to bring it to the surface from time to time. Acting is the one place where I can step out of the box of being "nice and appropriate" and really explore all the colors of my humanity. Right now I've been workshoping Blanche Dubois in A Streetcar named Desire. It's an incredibly challenging role, but devastatingly human and beautiful to reach into...

Which role has been the most challenging and which one your favorite?

I have too many favorite roles to choose from. The most challenging kind of acting I've ever experienced is doing motion capture, where unlike tv, film or theatre, there literally is not really a set or real props. You are completely rigged up with cameras and mics all over you, as are the other actors. You have to completely imagine everything that is happening in the scene and bring it to life as if it's real. It really goes back to the kind of play acting we did as kids, when we imagined that the backyard was a forest, that a stick was a gun, and that even in shorts and flip-flops, I was a warrior princess.

How is the life of a Voice Over Artist in Hollywood? Is it a very competition market as the acting business?

A lot of fun, a lot of hard work and extremely competitive.

What is next for Karen Strassman in 2019?

Tom Six's The Onania Club, which I star in, will be released the year, and so

will this cool new tv/horror series that I'm a part of.

Also other projects that I am not allowed to mention just yet. Looking very forward to all the new projects waiting for me, yet to be shot...

Who is your favorite Actor/Actress? And why?

The realer, the more messy, the more human the better.

I love:

Annette Benning

Patricia Clarkson

Judi Dench

Sara Paulson

Viola Davis

Cate Blanchet

3 things you can't leave your house without?

Phone, lipstick, and a warm layer of clothing for cold recording studios

What music do you like?

Joni Mitchell, Jewel, U2, Talking Heads, Van Morrison, James Taylor, Simon and Garfunkel, Stomae, Francis Cabrel, Carla Bruni, Queen, David Grey, Natalie Merchant

Your idea of a perfect Sunday is?

Swim and spend the rest of the day home alone with my kitty letting all the business and chatter of the world settle. I like reconnecting with the creativity and inspiration that comes in gentle solitude, listening to music, reading, writing, tidying after the previous weeks craziness, working on

scripts, reading poetry, folding laundry, and just feeling the breeze sweep gently thru my apartment. I like letting life settle and fall into perspective and remember what is really important, detaching from my crazy-squirrel like rhythms... a walk on the beach in the evening and dinner and close conversations with dear friends.

Something people don't know about you?

I'm mostly a shy introvert even though I love people and activity. I thrive on solitude and quiet.

What is your own definition of happiness?

Being at deeply peace with what is...

Being fully present love and soul in any given moment

If you could meet someone living or dead, who would it be and why?

Darrell Calkins (cobaltsaffron.com)

He is the most fascinating person I have ever met on the planet, and every conversation with him is an opening into what I call "The Real World"

I've learned more from him about the art of being alive than anyone one else, and every conversation or interaction I've had with him has changed my life in some way. If I could choose anyone one in the worlds, I would want to see him again.

What do you like to watch on Tv?

A lot of compelling series. Handmaiden Sharp Objects, The Act, Bosch, Better Things, Stranger Things

What is your favorite healthy food?

Avocados.

And your favorite cheat food?

Gelato, chocolate mousse, peach or blueberry cobbler.

Do you support any charities?

Yes, absolutely, and my favorite is covenanthousecalifornia.org

Where we can follow you?

karenstrassman.com

Instagram: [@karenstrassman](https://www.instagram.com/karenstrassman)

Twitter: [@karenstrassman](https://twitter.com/karenstrassman)

[karen strassman facebook fan page](#)

Quote: "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about."

Holiday Destination: Denmark, Paris or Hawaii

Drink: Lemonade

Song: This Must Be The Place (Naive Melody), sung by Shawn Colvin

Sports Team: Woman's USA soccer team

Movie: Wizard of Oz

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