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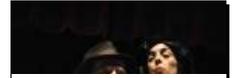
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## That's What She Said: A Talk With "The Good Wife's" Carrie Preston

By Bryan Gibson

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After starring in nearly 70 TV shows, feature films and theater productions, actress Carrie Preston shows no signs of slowing down.

And that's just fine with her.

Preston, best known for her roles as waitress Arlene Fowler on True Blood and lawyer Elsbeth Tascioni on The Good Wife, recently joined the cast of Person of Interest, which also stars her real-life husband Michael Emerson.

In recent years, she has moved behind the camera, directing,

producing or executive-producing such films as 29th and Gay (2005) and Ready? OK! (2008).

Her latest directorial effort, That's What She Said (2012), follows two best friends (Anne Heche and Marcia DeBonis), each with relationship problems, who embark on a New York City misadventure with a new acquaintance (Alia Shawkat). The film will be screened at the [College Town Film Festival](#) at the Athena Cinema on Oct. 5, followed by an audience Q&A with Preston.

WOUB's Bryan Gibson caught up with the Macon, Ga., native, fresh off her Emmy Award win for The Good Wife (Outstanding Guest Actress in a Drama Series), to talk about her new movie, the trials and tribulations of on-location filming and the perils of bringing snacks to the Emmys.

WOUB: This was your second time in the director's chair for a feature film. Was directing always a goal of yours? Or was it a natural transition after years of acting?

CP: I started my own theater company when I was in 7th grade, so I guess you could say I was always comfortable taking a leadership role in things! I like to have my hand in all of the aspects of filmmaking, and I feel like the acting enhances the directing and vice-versa. When you're acting, you are responsible for getting inside the skin of one character. But when you're directing, you have to get inside the skin of all of the characters. Either way, film is a collaborative art form, and that's what I love most about it.

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WOUB: That's What She Said is based on the play *Girl Talk*, written by Kellie Overbey. Could you tell me a bit about your involvement with the play and how it eventually became a film?

CP: Kellie is an actor and writer. She and I met in New Haven, Conn., at the Long Wharf Theater where we were playing sisters in a production of a play written and directed by James Lapine--Mia Farrow played our mother. In the production with us was Marcia DeBonis, a wonderful actor. Kellie had written a play called *Girl Talk*, and I fell in love with it on the first page. I said, "Kellie, you have got to let me direct this play, and we need to get Marcia to play Bebe." And that's exactly what we did, producing it off-off-Broadway in New York City. It went so well that I thought the story should find a "broad"er audience. So I encouraged Kellie to adapt it into a screenplay, and then I went about the long journey of getting it onto the screen. It took almost eight years, off and on.

WOUB: Speaking of New York, the film was shot on location there. Why did you decide to shoot in New York City and were there any particular production challenges you faced along the way?

CP: New York is a character in the film. It's sometimes such a battle even getting out the door in New York, so I wanted the city to be very present in the characters' lives. I took great pains to make sure the footage of the city was accurate as they travelled from the East Village to the Upper West Side and back down to Chinatown. Kellie, Marcia and I are all based there, so there was no question of where we would film. The challenge of shooting in New York is trying to find affordable locations and dealing with the logistics of having a crew up and running in tight quarters indoors and the concrete jungle outdoors. You could say that at times, we were battling the city as much as the characters were. But for the most part, we made it work by being extremely prepared for anything.



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WOUB: Anne Heche was quoted as saying "This film would have been very different with a guy director, since this is really a love letter to female friendship." In fact, the film centers entirely on the all-female cast, with very little male dialogue or interaction. Could you tell me about your decision to take that approach?

CP: The play had just the three women in it, so when I first envisioned it as a film, one of the main things I wanted to do was preserve that intimacy. The women are making their way through one day, and although the men are very much a part of their lives, this day is not about them. So I thought it would make sense to never really see their faces or hear their voices. The women were my shots. They were my focus. I wanted them up front and center, flaws and all. I didn't realize at the time how subversive that choice really was. The world of cinema is such a male-dominated one, and certainly a youth-obsessed one. So to zero in on these women over 40, and let them be as messy as they were, was a bold move but was completely appropriate to the material.

WOUB: Just a glance at your [imdb.com page](#) shows that you're currently involved with several film and TV projects, not to mention your directorial work. How do you manage to juggle everything?

CP: My schedule can be a logistical nightmare at times. But I am actually one of those people who is most happy when I'm doing a million things at once. I love being busy. It makes me feel alive and gives me a sense of purpose.

WOUB: Before we wrap up, I'd like to congratulate you on your recent Emmy Award. You've been to several of the ceremonies, but this was your first nomination, correct?

CP: This was my first Emmy nomination, yes. My husband Michael has been nominated five times, so I accompanied him to all of those ceremonies. But being a nominee felt different, and of course I was more nervous heading into it. Luckily, I had watched him navigate those waters, so I was grateful for that. It was an amazing feeling to win the award, and I still can't quite believe it.

WOUB: One last thing: I saw your tweet about having sandwiches confiscated at the event. What happened?



Carrie Preston  
@Carrie\_Preston

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CP: The day of the Emmys is really full. It takes forever to get all dolled-up, then you get there quite early to do the red carpet. Since they don't feed you at the Emmys, Michael and I started a tradition of bringing peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches to eat after the red carpet and before the ceremony. However, this year at the Creative Arts Emmys--where my category was presented--security confiscated our sandwiches! I'm still waiting to hear why anyone would think a sandwich would be a security threat...

That's What She Said will be screened at the Athena Cinema on Saturday, Oct. 5 at 7 p.m., followed by an audience Q&A with Carrie Preston and Ohio University Visiting Assistant Professor of Filmmaking Pearl Gluck. For more information about the College Town Film Festival, visit [www.collegetownfilmfestival.com](http://www.collegetownfilmfestival.com).