

## Interviews with the Cast and Crew of Carnivale from HBO.com

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### **"One More Look, Behind the Curtain "**

**Daniel Knauf**

*Carnivale creator Dan Knauf looks back at the first season and offers a sneak preview of season two.*

**HBO:** Let's get right to it: where will the show go in season two?

**DANIEL KNAUF:** Well, I think in episode 8, we saw a real change, as far as the show accelerating, picking up steam. Now we will pick up episode one of the second season at the moment we left off in episode one.

**HBO:** Right.

**DANIEL KNAUF:** There's a lot going on in season two, a lot.

**HBO:** So you think I mean it, it you expect to sort of pick up at that at that accelerated pace?

**DANIEL KNAUF:** Oh yeah, and it's going to accelerate from there.

We've laid all our groundwork now. Everybody knows who Brother Justin is, and so we've got all our back-story in there. Now we can start really moving forward.

**HBO:** When we first talked before the season began, you said that the theme of season one was alienation. Now that you can talk more about the storylines, can you elaborate?

**DANIEL KNAUF:** Alienation and self-discovery probably would be my amended version of the first season. Two people who have been

disconnected from humanity for some reason but have found out why and what they are.

**HBO:** What will some of the themes be going forward?

**DANIEL KNAUF:** This season is going to be about gathering power. On both stories, now that they know who they are. Very early in the season there's going to be a reveal-- why do you have these powers? And what is your destiny and what do you need to do with these powers?

It's about Justin building a power base; on Ben's side, it's more a matter of, of passing an awful lot of tests.

**HBO:** What about the other characters? How has someone like Sophie evolved over the first season?

**DANIEL KNAUF:** Oh no. I can't tell you what Sofie's status is.  
[LAUGHTER]

But as far as like all the other characters go, everybody has a role in the A story. There are also B and C stories, as far as the inter-relationships between the carnies and the freaks. You know similar to like the, the Jones-Rita-Sue thing. And the Jones-Rita-Sue thing feeds into what you know happens with Jones in the second season.

We're gonna see quite a bit of conflict within the carnival.

**HBO:** Hmm.

**DANIEL KNAUF:** As far as people choosing sides, people losing faith and people fighting to keep their faith. I know this sounds hideously vague, but I don't want to blow any surprises.

**HBO:** Did you did you have to sort of sit down and map out a strategy as far as season one's finale? To strike that balance between satisfying people at some level, but also not tying up every loose end?

**DANIEL KNAUF:** Yeah. I think it was a delicate balancing act because there were a lot of questions raised in the first season and we owed the audience some answers. But at the same time, to answer everything at that point, let's just close the book and put it back on the shelf, because we know what's gonna happen.

**HBO:** Right.

**DANIEL KNAUF:** So you do want to leave some things open for the big storytelling. But you don't want to have people feeling like, oh my god; all this show does is raise questions.

**HBO:** If you listen to interviews or read the message boards, it seems the main question fans wanted answered by the end of the season was who was good and who was evil. Did you think that that question is answered in the first season?

**DANIEL KNAUF:** I'm a little close to it, but frankly I was surprised that that question even went on past the first episode.

To me, the battle lines are fairly clearly delineated, even in the first episode. But in this kind of complex storytelling, nobody is going to be presented as a twirling-mustached bad guy. If you watch like interviews with mass murderers, they seem like ordinary guys. They don't seem particularly creepy. The fact is, if you're gonna be a successful predator, you're gonna have to present a pretty nice face to the public.

**HBO:** Right.

**DANIEL KNAUF:** On the other side, a guy in a white hat doesn't present that much interest to me. There's gotta be the temptation. Everything's a choice. Free will is such a huge part of this, and not all the choices are gonna be the right ones.

You could sit down and say, okay, Ben's a healer. And he lays his hands on little girl's legs, and the crops are just collateral damage. But then again you could look at it a different way. You could say that

Ben is really good at destroying things and the collateral effect is you know this little girl's walking around now.

**HBO:** Hmm.

**DANIEL KNAUF:** And to me that's the real question about Ben. Is he a healer? Or is he an assassin? Or both?

**HBO:** During our live chat following the finale, Nick Stahl said the only thing he'd change about his character is he'd like Ben to get some more action with the ladies. Is there any hope for him?

**DANIEL KNAUF:** Action? I'll make no comment. [LAUGHTER]

**HBO:** Not that kind of action.

**DANIEL KNAUF:** The problem is that the car chase is only going about twenty-two miles an hour. But you know hey, they're old cars. [LAUGHTER]

You know the Ben Hawkins character is going to become more and more activated. He knows what he's supposed to do now. The man that goes into Management's trailer at the end of episode 12, he's been set off on a task. Now it's not necessarily gonna be something that he wants to do. And it's not something that he feels good about doing all the time. But he has to do it. He's compelled to do it. Again,

free choice is always a factor in there. He could walk away from it. You know he could be tempted away from it. But time will tell to see if he stays the course.

**HBO:** So *Carnivale* has been renewed for another season. What do you think the fans' role has been in terms of getting the show picked up?

**DANIEL KNAUF:** They've been critical. I mean these people have been so passionate. I read virtually every posting there is. When I look at those postings, I don't read, "Hey dude, bitching episode." [LAUGHTER] That's not the kind of postings we get. I mean this is like a big part of their lives. And to me, that's insanely satisfying. And I think that HBO felt the same way. These folks know that passion is something that's only going to grow, and so here comes the second season.

**HBO:** Were you surprised at the intensity of the fan interest?

**DANIEL KNAUF:** Well, first of all yes. I mean you'd have to be deranged or the most insufferable egotist in the world to not be surprised, you know what I mean?

**HBO:** Yeah.

**DANIEL KNAUF:** But I was deeply gratified. Sometimes I would read things where people would say, "I know what he really meant when he named somebody this. And if you take the letters and it creates an anagram of that." And I'd think, boy I'm smart. [LAUGHTER]

We would sit here and we'd put together these dream sequences and they'd just be, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. There'd be three frames of a shot that give a little something away, and we'd be thinking, "This is so fast that hardly anybody's gonna see it." But we forgot about things like Tivo. People will watch these things frame-by-frame, and they'll post them on the Internet, frame-by-frame.

**HBO:** What can those fans expect from the next season?

**DANIEL KNAUF:** It's gonna be something that nobody's expecting. We're just gonna try to continue to blow minds, you know. And take people to places they've never been before.

## "Pushing the Envelope"

Rodrigo Garcia

*The director of Carnivàle's pilot talks about this cast, putting magic on film and why grown-up shows don't always end with a hug.*

*We are taking one of the most difficult times in American history - and I think it's a time that because of its poverty, because of, the weather, the mixture of the old and the new, the modern and the pre-modern, it's a very fertile ground for prophets, both good and evil.*

**HBO:** You've directed a number of Carnivale episodes for the first season. What do you think are the main themes of the show?

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** Obviously one of the main themes is the conflict between good and evil... Another extremely interesting theme is the theme of identity. Both leads -- Ben Hawkins and Brother Justin -- they're haunted by their powers, by their dreams. They dream of each other, although they don't know each other. So I think the theme of not knowing who you are -- trying to figure out what your place is, what your destiny is, is certainly one of the strongest themes in the series. The concept of good and evil, of course, that's a very vast

concept that can be approached from many ways. But what interested me was the conflict of these two people who don't know who they themselves are.

**HBO:** In a battle of good and evil, is it difficult to pace the series, to know when it ends?

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** I think the more it moves towards our world, the more it will ask to end. Because you know, the more contemporary it becomes, the more I think it might lose some of its mystique. Right now it's set in the Thirties, which is a very difficult time. And it's close enough to feel familiar to us and yet far enough where we can float the magic in there and it still seems--if not plausible-- it certainly suspends disbelief.

**HBO:** The period almost plays a role in itself in the show.

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** It plays a great role. Because, obviously, we are taking one of the most difficult times in American history - and I think it's a time that because of its poverty, because of, the weather, the mixture of the old and the new, the modern and the pre-modern, it's a very fertile ground for prophets, both good and evil.

The radio exists and people can begin to communicate and ideas travel. But it's also primitive enough that that things can be misunderstood. There's still a marriage of new science and

superstition. And I think that, together with the great poverty, it makes a very good period to tell the tale of two American prophets

**HBO:** It's interesting how many epic struggles are going on historically in the period...

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** Right, it's the period between the two World Wars -- you know, arguably the most fascinating cultural period, certainly in European history. There's the hangover from the first World War. And then in Europe, the birth and development of Fascism.

And, you know, I would be hard pressed to really form a connection between the world we live in and the world of Carnivale. But as it has turned out -- perhaps coincidentally, perhaps not - it is a world of two fundamentalist ideas, good and evil, that clash.

**HBO:** What about the supernatural elements of the show? Do you have an approach for special effect versus psychological effects?

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** That's always the tricky thing. How you introduce into a world that is basically based on a real world--the world of the Thirties, which is not that far back--how do we introduce the magic? My own approach, is to try to introduce it as naturally as possible. Not going to the magic world with big effects, with big

music, with big digital things. But just to let the magic happen just as if it were just another dramatic element in a scene.

But sometimes the magic that happens is big and we have to rely on digital things. We try to integrate it into the world so that at least every character in Carnival believes in that magic. Every character leads a very daily existence but every one accepts that other world of the unknown, of the magical, of secret powers. And hopefully if the characters can take it for granted, hopefully our audience will take it for granted also.

You know, no one in the carnival marvels at the supernatural. They accept it, and hopefully that will eventually include the audience.

**HBO:** And do you find it tricky to not get hung up on the freakish side of the carnies? Can you get the audience to care about the characters as people?

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** It's not difficult at all because I think the audience gets used to everything. You know, the wonder of a bearded woman lasts for all of one scene. Or take, for example, the character of Sophie, she reads cards. She's communicating telepathically with her mother who is catatonic and it's the mother who reads the cards. Well, that's all very well and good. But once that's established, it does not sustain you episode to episode to episode.

What sustains you is the drama of a young woman trapped inside a bus in a traveling carnival, penniless, having to take care of this invalid mother. So again, it's not the gimmick. It's not whether a person is little, whether the giant is giant, whether the twins are conjoined at the hip. You know, soon enough they become a person just like any other. And if you don't deal with their daily problems, with their frustrations and aspirations, they can become a bore.

**HBO:** Hmm.

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** Just like anyone who is not a freak.

**HBO:** What would say is the aspect of this program that you find the most intriguing as a director?

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** I think the cast that has been put together is really quite terrific. I mean, the cast is huge. There are close to twenty series regulars. And as a director world of it is fantastic. I think Dan Knauf did an excellent job of creating this very peculiar world. It's part comic book, part *Grapes of Wrath*. I think he did a great job with that. And it's certainly a very interesting world to move in as a director.

But I would be lying if I didn't say that the greatest pleasure is to be in that world with the cast that we have. Because, again, the magic, it's all very much fun. The freakish aspect of it is very much fun, and the

carnival, and the period - it's all very interesting. But week to week to week, if we're not engaged in the problems -- real, grand and petty -- of these characters -- we get used to everything.

**HBO:** Does the story get reshaped as the cast and as you get a hold of it?

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** I think the grand lines of the story are not reshaped. The actors play the characters that have been written for them. But at the same time, who they are and how they play them influences the writers. It goes in both directions. You know, there are a couple of characters who were not conceived originally to appear in every episode. But they have sort of imposed themselves and now they appear regularly.

**HBO:** The casting directors mentioned that there were a couple of people who just impressed everyone so much that you couldn't resist bringing them back into the show.

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** I think, like in every show, you usually plan for a set of characters to be regulars and others to appear in only certain episodes. But I think all the characters here live together in this small carnival. You know, they all live under the same roof, as it were. So they're all fascinating and closely intertwined. There they live in this traveling tent. Because the characters are so interesting it's very hard

to keep them out of the episodes. You know, almost everyone is there in every episode.

**HBO:** You've worked quite a bit with HBO. Can you draw any kind of comparison between this and Six Feet Under, or one of the other shows that you've done a lot of work on?

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** I think all HBO shows do share some qualities. HBO encourages the people who make them to take many, many chances. I know that is something that some networks claim that they want to do. But when you're on cable, you have much more freedom with adult subject matter, with adult situations, with language.

I've worked on, on Six Feet, on Sopranos and on Carnivale. And I would say that they all share that HBO desire to push the envelope as far as possible. You know, I don't think there's a recipe for an HBO series, except that desire to push and push and push. Oz is like that and The Wire. I haven't worked on those but I've seen them. I think that's what those series share. You know, it's: How can we push some more? How we can not make it a formula?

**HBO:** It's interesting to me because most people mention language and nudity and things like that. But for the most part, there is very little of it on those shows.

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** There's very little of it. Right, I don't mean sexual situations. I just mean adult situations.

I mean taking adult problems and adult situations to real levels. Dramatizing ideas, dramatizing problems to the point where we see things can not always work out. There is not always growth. There's no hug. There's seldom hugging and often there is no learning.

**HBO:** [LAUGHS]

**RODRIGO GARCIA:** Some characters learn. You know, some characters learn, other characters do not learn. There is no desire to teach a lesson. There is no desire to illuminate the audience. There is the desire to, to show real human conflict with all its ups and downs, all its good, and all its pitfalls. So when I say adult situations I don't mean necessarily sex or strong language or violence. I just mean adult situations that reflect adult life. Full of progress and lack of progress, growth and lack of growth, achievements and terrible frustration and big contradictions.

**"Creating 1934"**

**Mary Corey**

Carnivàle's historical consultant talks about keeping it real.

*I really love it. I mean the production people call me and say: When was the screw top bottle invented? Can cotton candy be white? Did bacon ever come in a jar?*

**HBO:** History plays a big part in Carnivale. The writers talk about a sense of uncertainty, a sense of peril. What do you think are the themes from the thirties that shaped the show?

**MARY COREY:** The thing about the Depression is you have twin peaks of terrible-ness going on. At the same time that this almost Job-like ecological disaster - the dust storms and the black blizzards - is going on, people are also just being destroyed economically and losing farms and, and losing savings and losing jobs. So you have a world in tremendous chaos, a world that's often turned upside down.

This is not something that we rolled up our sleeves and said, Hey, let's make this represent this on the show. Cause it's a smarter show than that. But I think in a certain way the eerie surreal-ness of the carnival is really mirrored in the culture, in reality. You know, the doctors are selling shoes and people who are otherwise white collar guys are riding the rails, just looking for work anywhere. And people are getting into cars and going to California, desperate, because they think that that's a place that hasn't been hit by the Depression. And then getting turned around at the border.

So you have a world that's in a kind of emotional chaos, where people are de-centered and ripped off of their moorings. And I think that the show -visually and intellectually and narratively - really mirrors that. Reality is ripped from its moorings in a certain way.

**HBO:** Have you planted historical signposts in this show?

**MARY COREY:** One of the reasons that I like the show so much is it's not all this and then this. I mean, yes, there're pictures of

Roosevelt, you know. I made sure that there were pictures of Roosevelt in lots of shots, because that was real. And there're posters from the NRA and the different New Deal things that show up in shots. But again, it's not highlighted, you know. It's not a history show.

**HBO:** Right.

**MARY COREY:** And I think that's one of the things that's going to make it so successful is that it's really of the period rather than about the period. Sometimes the writers would have some character write, "Well, we're in a Depression." And one of my notes would always be, people in a Depression don't go around saying that.

**HBO:** Right.

**MARY COREY:** I mean, these things are brought up once in a while. You know, it's very, very nuanced.

**HBO:** When do you come into the story process?

**MARY COREY:** I started working on the show at the beginning push. So a year ago May, we started meeting. I started meeting with the writers and the original show runner that long ago in conceptual meetings.

At that stage, you're not talking about how many people were in soup lines and that kind of thing. The creators were much more interested in over-arching ideas. And so from the very get-go, you know, I went to early script meetings as they were breaking down the stories.

**HBO:** Right.

**MARY COREY:** So I worked on that for six months and then I saw each script in draft and I gave notes. And then I usually see it again maybe once, maybe twice. I don't work on the set, although I try to go at least two or three times during the shooting. And, you know, once I actually did something on the set-- moved some Tarot cards into the proper position. [LAUGHS] But I mean, basically I'm not a, a hands-on historian on the set. As the process goes on I work with costumes sometimes, I work with production - you know, the art director will call me. The prop master. There were people that never called me, and there were people that called me all the time.

**HBO:** Hmm.

**MARY COREY:** There were people that, before they started to write their episode, we would be talking on the phone all the time. And there were other people that would wait until I gave notes. Working with writers, you know, you have to be sensitive to their style. You can't expect them to want to do what you say. And because the show

has a supernatural element, of course I didn't want to be saying, "Well, you can't say that."

**HBO:** [Laughs]

**MARY COREY:** Sometimes, I would sort of be the pooperdinkal who was raining on the parade. But, you know, they could say, Well, shut up. Because this is fiction. And that was fine with me, you know.

**HBO:** Do you have to play cop to the occasional, historical transgression?

**MARY COREY:** Oh certainly, although the transgressions are subtle. It isn't like they're a bunch of dummies. They're really smart people.

With a lot of scenes, it didn't seem like it was a historical problem. It seemed more like I was commenting on the writing or the script. But sometimes I would catch something about how somebody would behave. Because behavior is historical. You know: How angry would a woman be if somebody tried to kiss her? Or what would a girl actually say that to someone in that context? And also language. In first drafts you sometime see stuff where people are saying things like, "Well, he's, he's got a lot of baggage that he brings along with him."

**HBO:** Right.

**MARY COREY:** The thing is, being a historian is not about walking around and going, Al Capone died in 1928 and this war ended on this moment. And, you know, I'm not like a dictionary of historical fact. I know how to find stuff. And I can research. But it's much more about really getting the context right. And that's almost a cadence issue. It's almost like being a musician. You know, you're steeped in the period and you've read a lot of fiction from the period. Because I'm a cultural historian.

**HBO:** What does that mean, practically on the show?

**MARY COREY:** It means you've read a lot, and you've read a lot of magazines from the period, and you've listened to a lot of music, you know. Your ear picks up on something that doesn't sound right: homey don't play that in 1934.

**HBO:** That's really interesting. I was going to ask you about keeping the language accurate. But behavior for a time period takes it even further.

**MARY COREY:** I remember Adrienne Barbeau was really wonderful about wanting to know about behavior. One day when I was out on the set, she asked me questions about body language.

**HBO:** What other Thirties tips did you pass along?

**MARY COREY:** One of the things: When you really look at the Thirties' films and listen to Thirties' radio, people just talked really, really fast. I don't know why.

*Behavior is historical. You know: How angry would somebody be if somebody tried to kiss them? Or what would a girl actually say that to someone in that context?*

**HBO:** Hmm.

**MARY COREY:** There were certain ways of talking, body language things. And those things are very important. And then, you know, Dan is a big fan of slang and carny lingo.

**HBO:** Did you help with that?

**MARY COREY:** Slang was very important in the Thirties and in fact, it, you know, divided people. Hoboes had a certain slang and carnys had a certain slang. And it's almost like Sixties' slang, where people talked about things being far out and groovy and boss and bitchin'-it's all meant to say: "We're different from you. We know something is going on in here and you don't know what it is, do you, Mrs. Jones?"

That's part of the social work that lingo and argot does; that's why teenagers have language. It makes them be in a club that other

people can't be in. But at the same time, in domestic conversation it would be very unlikely that someone would use snappy slang to tell their husband to have a piece of cornbread. So we had debates over things like that.

**HBO:** Right.

**MARY COREY:** And some times Dan would overrule me and say, Come on, you know, you have to break some eggs to make an omelet.

It was a great job. I loved it. I mean, the production people would call and say, when was the screw top bottle invented? You know, can cotton candy be white? Did bacon ever come in a jar? [LAUGHTER] When was the Ferris wheel invented?

And those things are fun, too. I mean, in the past a real historian wouldn't have even done that work. They would just have a researcher that would do that. But with computers, I can do both sides of it. I can both talk about larger context, what was really happening in the world and the feeling and context of the world. And I can also very easily research-- you know, when did mustard gas get used in World War I?

**HBO:** How historically accurate would you say Carnivale is?

**MARY COREY:** I think it's always excellent, except when the supernatural is so powerful that it really doesn't matter. You know, in a show where glass shatters and eyeballs bleed, leeway is available.

But in terms of what the carnival was like, and what their lives were like, and what they wore, and what they ate, and how they slept, and their cars and all the material culture, it's impeccable.

**HBO:** Are there certain things that are hard to keep historically honest?

**MARY COREY:** Well, I guess I would say that the hardest thing, it's not a matter of keeping it. It's of knowing.

**HBO:** Can you tell us a little about your background?

**MARY COREY:** I am a 20th Century-ist. I teach post-World War II at UCLA, but my specialty is Vietnam era. I wrote a book that's a textual analysis of The New Yorker magazine, between 1945 and 1955 called The World Through a Monocle, The New Yorker at Mid-Century.

I've worked on a lot of non-fiction shows - I'm on the Board of The Living Century - this series about people over a hundred. And I've worked on documentaries about Kent State and other Sixties' events. And then I worked with two of the writers on Carnivale - the two

creators of the *The Education of Max Bickford*. I was the historical consultant on that show, which was right up my alley. It was a show about an American Studies professor. And I am one.

Before all that I worked in publishing and I worked as a TV writer and did some screenwriting. You know, not with great success. So I got my Ph.D. and got out of show business. [LAUGHS]

**HBO:** Well, not entirely...

**MARY COREY:** Well, no. But it came and found me. So that's different.

## "Beyond the Standard Fare"

John Papsidera

*Carnivàle's Casting director JOHN PAPSIDERA talks about getting inventive, pursuing movie stars and chasing people down on boardwalks.*

*Ben was tough to cast, because we wanted somebody that obviously is a hero, but appears to be an anti-hero. And had a certain amount of boy in him, yet enough strength to actually carry a series. Those*

*are a lot of different requirements--it's not like casting a kid in Freaks and Geeks.*

**HBO:** What was your initial reaction when you were approached about Carnivale?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** It was a mixture of fear and excitement. Because on pure logistical level, I felt like it was a huge challenge.

My casting associate (Wendy O'Brien) and I had done work looking into the freak world on past projects, so we kind of had made some exploratory ventures into those worlds, but this was something very different.

Plus, doing it in a period piece was really interesting. Because it's such a challenge to keep the period quality consistent as well as delving into the world of the carnival.

**HBO:** What, what was your previous foray into the freak world?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** One was on Bubble Boy, a movie that we did for Disney that had circus show freaks in it. So, we had done some exploration into that, and actually hired people like Lester Green, a sideshow performer who's known as Beetlejuice, and the guy who has the largest foot in the world.

**HBO:** And is the casting approach different on Carnivale?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** I think our approach was different in the sense that nobody wanted to use makeup to create illusions. Part of the realness of Carnivale really depended on the realness of the people that were the sideshow people. Of course, it's very difficult to find conjoined twins, especially that can act and are healthy enough to be able to perform. So that was one concession that we knew we were probably gonna to have to concede to.

But beyond that they wanted the people to be as real as possible.

**HBO:** How do you go about finding people that, that make sense in those roles?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** You try to be inventive. I found one person working in a restaurant. You venture onto the Internet, make calls to circus people. And then, sometimes, you just have to chase down people on the boardwalk.

**HBO:** The "conjoined" twins on Carnivale were actually in the circus, weren't they?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** Yeah, Cirque du Soleil. They performed in O in Vegas for years, but they started in Cirque du Soleil in Canada. They

did an aerial act on a rope called circus people call "silks." And they did kind of a mirror act as twin sisters.

**HBO:** Was there a part on the show that you thought was the toughest from the beginning

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** I think finding Brother Justin, and the process of everybody kind of coming around that. It's a tough role.

And I think we got really lucky with convincing Nick to throw his hat in the ring and take on a series. I mean, I've known Nick for years, and he passes on a lot. So, to convince him that this is something unique and that he should open himself up to the world of doing a series, I felt like it was a big coup.

**HBO:** Do you think that a series on HBO--with the shorter seasons and a certain creative reputation-- is an easier sell to actors?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** Yeah, absolutely. I mean, there's no question about it. A regular television show doesn't present the opportunities for actors to continue in a film career; it just doesn't. I mean, you get to do one movie a year, if you're lucky. And the timing's got to be perfect.

**HBO:** Could you give a bit of an overview of the process that you go through, from getting the script to casting the right person?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** Well, we read the script; we talk about what kind of characters came up in the new episode, and then my casting associate (Wendy O'Brien) and I talk about ideas, talk about people that we think are right. We try to remember people that we had seen for other episodes that we loved, but that weren't necessarily right for the others. We had a lot of conversations about reminding one another to always push the envelope and not just settle for the standard fare.

I think we were really successful in doing that, going after people that have film careers and that were in the process of doing movies, that we could steal for an episode or two. And convincing them that it wasn't a huge time commitment, that they should be part of this kind of unique series.

**HBO:** Does anyone jump out, at you as an example of someone you managed to convince?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** Yeah, John Hannah, certainly. John Hannah starred in Sliding Doors with Gwyneth Paltrow and Four Weddings and a Funeral, and he had just come off starring in a series, MDs.

**HBO:** Right.

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** He was a little hesitant to go back into the TV world, having just gotten done with starring in a series, and he had a lot of film people at him. But he came in, we had a great meeting with him, and he saw the opportunity in the material and agreed.

And Gabe Mann-- Gabe had just got done starring in the prequel to The Exorcist. Convincing people like that that they should come and be part of the show was great. I felt really proud to be able to do it.

**HBO:** Let's talk about some of the parts. You mentioned the character Ben. What would you say were the prerequisites for that part?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** It was a really tough. Initially, at the pilot, it was tough because you had a large group of people to get on the same page. There were four or five producers. There was the director, then there's the studio, and the executives, it was a lot of people to get in agreement.

And Ben was tough because you wanted somebody that obviously is a hero, but appears to be an anti-hero. And had a certain amount of boy in him, yet enough strength to actually carry a series. And those are a lot of different requirements--it's not like casting a kid in Freaks and Geeks that is part of an ensemble. He had to be a leading man, yet he had to still have a youthfulness and an innocence about him. And I think, ultimately Nick has an incredible presence and is a great

actor, but also has a really haunted quality that we all thought worked perfectly for the period.

**HBO:** Before you got to Nick, were there a lot of different opinions about what you were looking for?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** Yeah, although we probably had the most consensus about Nick. And that's nothing about the other guys that tested for it; he just encapsulated a lot of different qualities in one package.

*HBO is very comfortable with the "tip of the iceberg." They don't necessarily know where these characters are going, or what exactly these characters are when they start. And that gives you an amazing opportunity to shape characters.*

**HBO:** What you mentioned that you thought Brother Justin was a tough part.

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** Brother Justin and also Clea's role, Sophie.

Initially Sophie was written as kind of this gypsy girl. And, if you look at that, that's not necessarily what Clea looks like. I think, Dan Knauf had envisioned dark hair and exotic looks, and ultimately we saw a lot of people like that. It was really hard, there was a lot of different thinking on which way to go with Sophie.

**HBO:** Hmm.

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** One thing about HBO is that they're very comfortable with the "tip of the iceberg," as we like to call it. They didn't necessarily know where these characters are going, or what exactly these characters are when they start. And that gives you an amazing opportunity to shape characters. But as casting directors it's a very difficult thing, because not everybody has the same idea of what they are, and where those characters are going.

**HBO:** What about the character of Samson?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** From the very beginning, I remember going into the initial meeting with Dan Knauf and [supervising producer] Dan Hassid, and pulling out Michael's picture and saying, "That's Samson."

**HBO:** Hmm.

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** And, I just think he's an incredibly unique guy. A really good actor, but there is a vulnerability and a sensitivity to Michael that you just care about. It's almost like he's this other being. He's just got an amazing soul and an...aura about him. So for me, there was never any other competition.

**HBO:** What about Jonesy?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** We saw a lot of guys for Jonesy as well. And I think, it ultimately came down to a feel for the period, which I think Tim DeKay is great at doing. And a look that is not so on the nose as pretty boy.

**HBO:** Is there something about certain performers that you think brings out a period quality?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** Yeah, I mean, I think there's an indescribable thing that's very American. With Jonesy, we talked a lot about the fact that there's a look to baseball players. You know, you can't really put a lot of football players in a baseball outfit and buy it.

**HBO:** Right.

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** I don't what exactly, but there's something very American about period baseball players. If you look at the photographs of Dorothea Lange. We tried to replicate that image of the Depression-- you have to worry about body types, you have to worry about the feel of people and how people sound.

I mean, some people would come in, and just speaking, had too much of a contemporary feel. And we'd look at one another and kind of go, "Hmm. Feels contemporary." And that's just a gut reaction.

One person sounding like they are from Van Nuys as opposed to the Midwest, can ruin an entire episode, or an entire scene.

**HBO:** Tell us about casting Adrienne Barbeau. How did that come about?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** I think as a casting director, you try and approach stuff as fresh. And I think casting Adrienne plays into that—something you haven't seen. And I think it played into the Tim DeKay casting, to some degree, because there were a few actors that were more known, had done series before, had a persona, and we didn't want it to be baggage.

We didn't want somebody to look at the piece and go, Oh, that's so and so from Eight is Enough. With Adrienne, it felt like it was an entirely new kind of way to view her. She also came in and gave an absolutely fantastic audition. Her Ruthie has a ballsiness and a solidity to her and a strength to her that isn't old, it isn't haggard; there is a sexuality and a vivaciousness to it. It just felt really right.

**HBO:** Did you deliberately avoid performers who are strongly identified with another project?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** I have to say we did, in some ways. You don't want to be look at someone and think, "Oh, I remember. There they

are from the show that got canceled last year, and here they are in this." I think part of the secret of casting is trying to make it as seamless as possible.

**HBO:** Do you think there's something about this project that makes that even more important?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** I do, and I think it has to do with the period quality of it. You have to buy it. If you don't buy the world that this series is set in, you're dead. I think it'll be hard enough for an audience to buy the mythology of what's happening, and the mystery and the magic that occurs within the show. So for them to battle also "There's, Eric Estrada off of ChiPs," it's too much.

**HBO:** Right.

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** I don't want to sound pretentious. But the more seamless and invisible you can make that tableau of actors, the easier it is to digest the fantastic quality of the material.

**HBO:** Did you have any casting surprises in this project?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** Hmm....not Debra, the Bearded Woman. We knew that Debra would be fantastic as that. Again, that was a role that I think Dan Knauf saw very differently, but ultimately got what Debra brought to the table. A sexuality and a real strong presence.

I think that's always what we try and do, is bring the best actor to the table, because it ultimately gives you the most freedom. Especially in a show like this, to allow where characters go.

That was a huge part of the Amy Madigan casting. Because the depth of what Amy Madigan can do, opens up all kinds of writing possibilities.

The other thing is that you never know where these characters are going to end up. Somebody that came in one episode and we thought was going to be gone was Blake Shields.

**HBO:** Osgood?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** Yeah, Osgood. They fell in love with Blake in the episode that he was going to do and suddenly it was: "Well, Blake, we should get Osgood to come back. Or why aren't we using Osgood for this?"

I think it's a tough thing too, to have so many series regulars in such a huge cast, and be able to service all of them in a story line.

**HBO:** So do you have to be on call to handle shifts like that?

**JOHN PAPSIDERA:** Wendy O'Brien was, fortunately and unfortunately married to the project, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. That's just part and parcel to the demands of a show this big.

## "Character References"

**Dawn Prestwich & Nicole Yorkin**

*Writing veterans Dawn Prestwich and Nicole Yorkin help bring humanity to Carnivàle's far-out denizens.*

*Ultimately, it all comes down to character, which is something we're really comfortable with. And when we felt we needed some weird shit, and it wasn't popping into our heads, we would just turn to Dan Knauf.*

**HBO:** Can you tell us a little bit about your role on the production?

**NICOLE YORKIN:** Well, we are technically co-executive producers, and in the field of television, that means that we are writers who also produce our own material.

**HBO:** Do you remember what you thought when you first were presented with this wild series?

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** We initially read a script, and that was what got us really interested in the show. We were looking for something interesting to do, and the pilots and shows on network television were just not really interesting to us. Then this script came across our desk, and it was unlike anything we had ever done before.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** It just seemed wildly inventive, you know. I remember specifically reading the moment where the parishioner starts vomiting the coins.

**HBO:** In the pilot.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** And that was the moment that really hooked me, and I thought, well, this is something completely different.

And this is unlike anything we've ever seen on television before.

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** And it was compelling to us, because it wasn't just dark fantasy, it was about characters-- it was about really interesting characters. The potential of where these characters could go really pulled us in.

Even though we had never written anything like this before--we tend to be very natural drama writers--we felt like this could be something exciting, and we could bring something to it. So we started beating down the door.

**HBO:** I know you worked on *The Education of Max Bickford*, and *Chicago Hope*, and several David E. Kelly shows. It seems like it's a pretty interesting gear shift to get to *Carnivàle*. Did you have a hard time, making that shift?

**NICOLE YORKIN:** Well, you know, it's interesting. We actually created *Max Bickford*, that was our show, and *Max Bickford* was a show about a history professor. It involved a lot of research, because neither of us were history majors, and neither of us had gone to a women's college.

For this show, once we were hired, we started by doing our research. Dan, who is a student of this kind of material, started indoctrinating all of us in science fiction and science fantasy and horror-- and all types of genres that really weren't the type of material that Dawn and I had been working with.

And as staff we started watching movies--everything from Fellini to what was that movie with Johnny Depp?

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** From Hell.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** From Hell. And so we were able to eventually see that writing is writing. And imagination is imagination, and it all comes down ultimately to character, which is something we're really comfortable with. And when we felt we needed some weird shit, and it wasn't popping into our heads, we would just turn to Dan Knauf.

**HBO:** [LAUGHS]

**NICOLE YORKIN:** He's the king of weird shit, so it was great. I mean there was good synergy that way. There were a lot of strengths in the room, and we all bring it to the page, I think.

**HBO:** Dan had a pretty strong idea about where the plot was going from the beginning; did he lay it all out for you?

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** It was interesting, we just sat there for weeks and weeks in a room, all of us, kind of talking about what direction would be interesting. We would dismiss ideas because they would feel like we'd seen them before. It was a real process. And I think that Dan definitely feels that we have gone in the direction he had originally envisioned.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** But then it's a process.

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** It's organic, yeah, it became a very organic process.

**HBO:** Did you have to sit down and sort of discuss the rules for the supernatural characters?

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** Yes. Yes, we did. We really had a lot of conversation, especially about Brother Justin. And what it was that Brother Justin could do.

**HBO:** Hmm.

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** And what he couldn't do.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** And, the same with Ben.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** What were Ben's talents, and if he were going to do something, what would the cost be.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** Then, as the series developed-- you know, over about fourteen months--as the show began filming things would change. Things would mutate, and we would have to either develop new rules or we'd have to shift them a little bit.

We'd realize that by writing it one way, we'd pretty much ruined this other arc that we were planning, because we rendered something moot, or we've made one character too powerful. That was the hardest aspect of the show. And it still is. It's determining what everyone can do, how far they can go. We spent a lot of time talking about other supernaturally oriented shows, and why they succeeded, and why they failed.

*We also love the wonderful metaphor of Sophie, the young girl living with her mother. Because every woman in the world has their mother in their head.*

**HBO:** Hmm.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** And in terms of failure, we realized that one of the big problems was that you can just shoot your wad really early. You know, you start every episode trying to top yourself in terms of the next big supernatural thing that you do. Eventually we realized that

with the kind of show we had, with this good versus evil, we would have people with light sabers by the end of the first season.

**HBO:** [LAUGHS]

**NICOLE YORKIN:** That was a real challenge too, trying to figure out what our pacing was.

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** And HBO had very strong ideas about that as well. You know, they didn't want it to be too big too fast.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** We spent a lot of time talking about what we actually think the ultimate showdown is. And it'll be interesting to see if we end up doing what we all have discussed or if something new comes to us.

That's what also happens in the process--you go along and everyone's fairly certain this is where we're going to go, and then all of a sudden someone just says, So what about this? And it's a great, you know, it's a great idea. We've just learned to sort of trust the room and trust that eventually we'll get there. [CHUCKLES]

**HBO:** Do you remember any of the movies or series that you thought had really handled that balance of the supernatural well?

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** I think things like the X-Files handled it well. They were a very different kind of franchise, so we couldn't really compare ourselves to that. Nick Roeg's *Don't Look Now*. There were more films than TV series.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** Yeah. It's harder to sustain it.

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** Yeah. In fact, one of our biggest challenges is just to sustain, to get close solving things, and then bring a new mystery as we go. And trying to handle all the balls we have in the air. [CHUCKLES]

**HBO:** Dan had said that he initially expected to get further along the story arc in the first season than you eventually did.

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** I think what ended up happening is that it became clear that what we all really wanted was character development. We wanted to really invest in the characters, because that was the only way we were going to care about what happened to anyone.

**HBO:** Right.

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** It sort of slows everything down, a little bit, but it doesn't make it boring, it just makes it richer, I think.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** And that is pretty much the HBO way. If you look at shows like Six Feet Under and The Sopranos.

**HBO:** Right.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** And as a result, you have to keep watching in episode after episode, but you really know the characters. And you can be surprised at each episode; there's no pat ending.

**HBO:** What do you think it's going to take to get people hooked on the show-- what do you think will be the thing that really draws people into Carnivàle?

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** I think it really goes to the characters and the magic. I think that's the combination. You need characters that you haven't really seen before, but that are totally relatable. And the fact that there is this incredible magic to the show.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** I'll just add that there is nothing like it on television. You know, it's not a cop show, it's not a lawyer show, and it's not a medical show. And there's not a dead body that's being examined. Maybe people will be hungry for that.

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** As far as the writing goes for us, it is by far the most unique, most exciting show that we've ever written on. It's also the hardest, but I think it's really worthwhile.

HBO: Why is it the hardest?

NICOLE YORKIN: It really stretches all of your writerly muscles, because there is not your typical franchise. There is not that lawyer franchise, you know, we don't go to court every week, or go into the operating room. So there's an open playing field. Dan has created this template for the most creative type of writing you can imagine; we're able to pretty much do whatever we can think of doing.

And yet, since it is serialized, there are threads that we have to pick up each week, and we can't drop a stitch.

*The cootch show actors especially are incredibly brave. Because it's not like they're real strippers. And they just got hired and came in and found themselves stripping in front of forty extras.*

HBO: Do you have a favorite moment from the first season?

NICOLE YORKIN: Well, maybe because we're the women writers on the show-- we and Toni Graffia are the women writers-- we feel a certain affinity to some of the women characters. We really have a certain affection for the little troupe of hootchie-cootch dancers.

HBO: [LAUGHS]

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** Yeah, we love them.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** Yes.

**HBO:** The Dreifusses are an interesting family.

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** We have loved writing some of their storylines this season. We also love the wonderful metaphor of the young girl living with her mother that Sophie is. We love that. Because every woman in the world has their mother in their head. [CHUCKLES]

**HBO:** [LAUGHS]

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** But she literally has her in her head. And it makes her insane. And we love that. But we have so many favorite moments, I can't even pull out just one.

**NICOLE YORKIN:** I would also say that the cast of this show is an amazing cast to work with.

I mean, they're lovely people, and they're so generous, and they're just a joy to write for.

**DAWN PRESTWICH:** And they're very brave. The crotch show women especially are incredibly brave. Because it's not like they're real strippers. [CHUCKLES]

And they just got hired and came in and found themselves stripping in front of forty extras. And they did it beautifully, and very bravely, and they really make those characters work.

**"From Wang-Wang to Bouzouki "**

**Kevin Edelman & Alexandra Patsavas**

*Music supervisors Alex Patsavas and Kevin Edelman make sure the sounds of Carnivàle go well beyond the greatest hits.*

**HBO:** What's the process for choosing music on a show like Carnivale?

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:** We're given a lot of directives as far as what the creators want to accomplish with the music. And then we might come up with three or four options. Then, getting to the song that's actually picked, it's quite a long process.

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** We have ideas that we bring in and present. The producers are usually very receptive, and then they also have their own ideas from the beginning about what they would like to accomplish using music. It's kind of a team effort between us and the composer to accomplish that, using songs and underscore.

**HBO:** With *Carnivale*, you have this big, sweeping, epic story. How do you get started--did you sit down and try to immerse yourself in it?

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:** Well, this has been a really wonderful, unique challenge, because almost all the source music we're using in the show is pre-1934, which is when the story takes place, so we're able to delve into the world of the twenties and the early thirties, and really make ourselves familiar with the more obscure and the more popular songs of the time. From blues and folk and pop and big band, and...

**KEVIN EDELMAN:**...Ethnic as well. As music supervisors and creative people, it's been a unique opportunity to work in an era that we typically don't get a chance to work in. Television projects-- and film projects, for that matter--aren't usually period pieces. There was a lot of research involved.

*This show presents a lot of opportunities for us to stretch musically-- everything from the radio pop music of the thirties to Rembetika music from Istanbul*

**HBO:** Could you give us a taste of what some of the music you're talking about? You'd mentioned, ethnic, blues, and jazz...

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:** We're using some Cab Calloway; we're using a female crooner of the era, Annette Hanshaw, with a song called You Wouldn't Fool Me, Would You? We're licensing some Rembetika music from Istanbul, which was recorded in the late 20s. Wang-Wang blues by Fletcher Henderson. A lot of jazz. So, we're really being able to use a lot of different things.

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** We're running the gamut of the music of the era, really, and this show presents a lot of opportunities for us to stretch musically, from everything from the radio pop music of the time to some of this ethnic music that Alex was just mentioning.

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:**...Mildred Bailey...

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** Yeah. A lot of the pop jazz of the time seems to fit the show, but then also the blues and, occasionally, some of the traditional folk music of the era.

**HBO:** How does the Istanbul music fit?

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:** One of the characters has a great interest in international music, and so we've been able to bring that to life with some different music choices.

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** In some ways each of the characters has its own musical voice. Not specifically, but we tried to help...

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:**...define the character.

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** Yeah, we try to help define the characters with a musical taste or a musical flavor. You know, some of the characters tend to listen more to European classical music, and others might be more inclined to put on a popular jazz record. So it really helps the audience to understand the character a little bit better when they can see a little bit of what makes them tick.

**HBO:** Could you give us an example of a character that you think is defined by their music?

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:** I would say Lodz.

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** The music that we use in a lot of scenes with Lodz tends to be kind of stately, you know, European classical.

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:** And he listens to opera.

**HBO:** Who plays the pop music?

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** We also tend to use more of the pop music when the carnival's in the cities. Whereas when the carnival is traveling through the dustbowl, and they are in more remote towns, there might be more blues, more folk, and some more ethnic music playing.

**HBO:** Does music have a big part in this show, compared to other projects you've worked on?

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** I think in general, it has a bigger role than it would on most television shows. It's a part of what makes it feel authentic.

We try to help define the characters with a musical taste or a musical flavor. It really helps the audience to understand the character when they can see a little bit of what makes them tick.

**HBO:** Can you think of a music moment in this season that you're especially proud of?

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:** I love Love Me or Leave Me. By Ruth Etting.

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** Yeah, that is great. That's actually a defining song that's used in two episodes.

**HBO:** How is it defining?

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** It's tied thematically with Brother Justin, and with several other characters. It really worked for the mood and the themes that they were trying to bring out in these characters and in these particular scenes. It's used in a somewhat eerie, nostalgic kind of way, and reprised in that way as well, so it is a very interesting use of a song.

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:** It's been really challenging as well as rewarding to find unknown songs. We haven't just gone for the top three songs of every year, pre-'34; we've been able to find the Bouzouki music of by Rita Abadzi or things that are a little less-known and that still really go well in the episodes.

**HBO:** Do you have to go out of your way to avoid the clichés of '30s music?

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:** Absolutely. Of course, some of those are valid, too, in certain situations. You just don't want to turn it into the greatest hits of 1934.

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** Yeah, and it was actually something that the producers had a mandate about.

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:** We would certainly use, say, Bing Crosby, who was huge, and was certainly representative of the time.

**KEVIN EDELMAN:** You can't ignore that there were the radio the pop radio stars at the time, because that would be inauthentic as well. We try to place the music where it felt appropriate to help build characters, and to help define a character's taste in music. With the carnies, for example, it wouldn't be all radio pop music.

**ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS:** Right, cause it does take place in the Dustbowl. So you'd hear certain regional music, for example. That's why this project is so interesting - we've really been able to dig deeper into the catalogs.

## "Dressing the Dust Bowl"

Sara Andrews Ingrassia

*Carnivale's 'interior decorator' makes 1934 real-from sheet music to stuffed monkeys.*

**HBO:** What's the set decorator's role on the production?

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** Well, the production designer is like the architect; he gives the overall feel of the show. The set decorator's kind of like the interior designer. I have creative meetings with Dan Bishop, the designer. And he tells me what direction we're going.

I read the script and break it down and decide how to best develop the character. Sometimes it's not even things that you're necessarily gonna notice on camera.

But it's the overall vibe that you kind of feel. Set decoration also helps the actors become their character.

**HBO:** Can you give us an example of how you help fill out a character?

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** Ruthie, for instance: She's kind of sultry, and she's a snake charmer, and she's kind of sexy. And with any of the Carnivale people you presume that they've been traveling around, they've had kind of a colorful past. So, for somebody like Ruthie, I looked for things that had textures like satins and silks and things that were kind of see-through. She has a lot of drapes and pillows in her trailer. Textures that are kind of sexy. She has a lot of perfume bottles and pictures of places that she might've been, postcards that she's saved.

For a lot of the Carnivale people, we supposed that they're kind of interested in show business. So we would find magazines from the 1930's, Hollywood magazines. So you're always kind of thinking who these people are and what their past would've been like.

Iris and Brother Justin were originally from Russia. So, we kind of used that a little bit when we were thinking about their stuff. Lodz's trailer is more Eastern European-looking. And for Chin's, we had to find a lot of Asian things--there were a lot of Asian people in California at that time, so it wasn't too hard to find some stuff dating from that time period.

A lot of times I'll assign somebody something that they collect--like seashells or ceramic dogs. Are they a dog person or are they a cat person? Or are they not an animal person at all? That gets fun, starting to do those little things--like sheet music on a piano. Who are they, and what is their sheet music?

*Everything has to look real just in case they just in case they point a camera somewhere you weren't thinking that they were going to. And if somebody sits at a desk and it's a long scene, you want to give them enough stuff so that if the actor wants to fiddle around and open a drawer, there's something in there.*

**HBO:** Is it hard to keep the show accurate to the period?

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** I think one of the interesting things that comes into any period piece is doing the research on it. We had a pretty extensive research library in our art department that we could always go to. And one of the biggest sources that we used was that Sears catalog. You can buy those at flea markets and antique stores, Sears catalogs from any given year, although they're getting pretty hard to get a hold of. We had a Sears catalog from 1934. And so we would look in there whenever we weren't sure about something. We would look it up in the Sears catalog and see, oh yeah, they did make metal Venetian blinds back then.

And after awhile you start knowing exactly what telephones they had, and what the electrical outlets looked like. We had telephone poles going up in Mintern, where Brother Justin lives, and we had to find out like what kind of transformers were up on the poles in the 1930's.

**HBO:** It sounds a bit overwhelming.

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** There's a lot more to the whole thing than just the creative part of it.

**HBO:** Right.

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** Right. Or some character's a heavy smoker. So you gotta find somebody who smokes and tell them to start saving all their cigarette butts for the ashtray.

**HBO:** Right.

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** [CHUCKLE] Suppose a character's having a fire. Then, they change the script and the fire's gone out. If the fire's burning, they have to have an effects person who comes makes a fire. But if the fire's burnt out, then we have to build a fire, burn it out, take the logs and make it look like it just burned out. So there's, lots of things that you see on screen, and you say, oh that's a burnt out fire. But it probably took some, guy half the day to make the

burned out fire. And occasionally you wind up having to call up someplace and say, hey, do you have any pre-burned logs?

**HBO:** What was the strangest item you had to find for the show?

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** I think the all-time creepiest thing we got was a stuffed monkey, for the scene in the baggage trailer.

It's weird when you're deciding where to go to lunch, but you're standing at the prop house, and you're like "Real quick before we leave, let's get some of these stuffed monkeys."

*Set decorating is about making things reflect the real world, and sometimes that's beautiful and sometimes it's not. But usually, usually the most important part is making it look real*

**HBO:** Is there an art form to being able to finding those hard to find items?

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** I've been decorating for a long time. And everybody that works for me has been doing it a long time. And you start to know, off the top of your head. Dan Bishop could say to me: I'm thinking of doing this, do you think that there're any green Victorian sofas out there? And you say to yourself, "This prop house, second floor, third aisle on the right. There're three of them." In order to do this job, you've obviously got to be someone who likes interior

design and art decorating. So I basically shop all the time, every day.  
[CHUCKLE]

HBO: Right.

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** So you're going from an antique store in Pasadena to the prop houses to Target or K-Mart.

HBO: What can you get at Target?

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** We got things like sheets that then we have to take and kind of age a little bit so that they look like they've been used for a long time. The actors are gonna be sleeping in the bed, so you want to know where the sheets came from. We got a lot of old tin plates and cups for the cook's tent, but they tend to be kind of gross. You're not gonna ask an actor to be drinking his coffee out of that cup. So then you go to the Army Surplus Store, and you get some of them, and you take them and you kind of throw them on the ground and step on them a little bit, and then you clean them, so that they're kind of dinged up. They blend in, but they're like nice and clean and sanitary. [CHUCKLE].

On Carnivale I think we used like every Victorian in the city of LA. One of the prop houses wound up finding a source to buy us more because we'd gone through all of our contacts. And we had a guy who made us two thousand feet of the old lights -- twisted wire that

was covered with cloth with fake light plugs on it. Even if it doesn't turn on, you want it to be plugged in.

You never know what they're gonna shoot. I can have a script, but on the day they could pick a different camera angle. They're still gonna be saying the same words, but I don't know where they're gonna point the camera in the set. So, everything has to look real just in case they just in case they point it somewhere you weren't thinking that they were going to. And if somebody sits at a desk and it's a long scene, you want to give them enough stuff so that if, if the actor wants to fiddle around and open a drawer there's something in there.

**HBO:** Right.

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** You kind of have to be a little psychic too. Usually if I'm out somewhere and some thought occurs to me like, "We might need a frying pan," and then I think, no they didn't, say anything about cooking. But I think okay, well if I had the thought, I better get a frying pan. Cause as soon as I think it, it'll be Friday at midnight, and my phone will ring with them saying, do you know where we could grab a frying pan?

**HBO:** Where do you get your inspiration?

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** I've been to most parts of the country at this point in my life. And to Europe and Mexico. Any time I go to

somebody's house I always have to be nosy and ask them if I can look at their house. Because you just get ideas. Set decorating is not necessarily interior design. It's not always about making something beautiful.

**HBO:** Right.

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** Set decorating is about making things reflect the real world, and sometimes that's beautiful and sometimes it's not. But usually, usually the most important part is making it look real, and making somebody feel like that's a real world that they're watching on the screen. And so, I think, "Well, I put my toothbrush in this kind of container, but where does my friend Stephanie keep her toothbrush?" So when I'm at her house I look.

I have a little child, but when I'm home visiting my family I always check out my niece's bedroom, because I know for sure at some point I'm gonna be doing a teenage girl's bedroom. And I get fresh ideas about what she's got hanging on her walls, what she's collecting on her desk. I'm always kind of checking out the real world. If I go to the doctor, I check out what they have stuck behind the counter. All this stuff that you may not necessarily notice in your life, but you would really miss it if it wasn't there. Garbage cans and safety lights and security passes.

**HBO:** Dan Knauf had said that he couldn't believe that you all had been able to realize what he had in his head.

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** I think on *Carnivale* we created a pretty interesting look, a pretty interesting world. When I have to get something from a set and nobody else is around and I sit down on the sofa, I think this really feels like exactly like I'm in the 1930's. You start to get a little creeped out, and you know the set came out well.

**HBO:** What's one of the best things about your job?

**SARA ANDREWS INGRASSIA:** You're in places that people don't necessarily get access to. One day you might be in like an old ballroom. And the next day you might be out in the middle of like the most beautiful field in the hills of Malibu, watching the sun rise while your truck is off-loading. You're just like all over the place, and you're doing something different, all the time.

When you're doing something this ambitious, you've got that healthy fear--oh my god I've got a lot of work to do. But then, when you get it all done, and you're standing there, and you're looking at it, you think wow, this really came out the way I wanted it to. It's really rewarding.

## "Master of the Carnival"

Howard Klein

*Executive producer Howard Klein pays attention to every detail, from the original pitch to music cues.*

**HBO:** How did you first get involved with Carnivàle?

**HOWARD KLEIN:** Scott Winant introduced me to Dan Knauf. They came in and pitched me the basic premise of Carnivàle. Dan mentioned that the idea was in his head for many years, however, he wasn't sure if it was a movie, a TV show or a mini-series. After a few meetings and conversations, I felt confident we had a fantastic episodic television series that could last for many years.

**HBO:** Is it unusual for you to get involved with a project when it's as unformed as that?

**HOWARD KLEIN:** Not at all, it's what I do every day. Many great ideas start as just notions in a writers' head. Sometimes they end up as feature films, or television series or sometimes they're just sketch ideas. Dan started out with a complex world with an intricately woven set of characters. I think I provided the sounding board he needed to help structure and define the show.

**HBO:** What were some of your other first impressions when Dan started talking about this thing?

**HOWARD KLEIN:** Well, I thought the guy was crazy [LAUGHTER]. But after our initial set of meetings, I realized that Dan had keyed in to something really special. The originality, the richness, the scope, texture, the epic nature got me positively charged.

**HBO:** What was the next step after that?

**HOWARD KLEIN:** We needed to get the "pitch" ready. My job was to prepare the writer the best I could to articulate the concept, the world, the characters, the stories and be able to answer any potential questions that a network might have. I felt that HBO was the logical first place to go, so I set up the meeting with HBO's Chris Albrecht and Carolyn Strauss. They loved the "pitch," and made us an offer to develop it.

**HBO:** Is this show more demanding than other projects you've worked on?

**HOWARD KLEIN:** Yes, I've never done anything on such a grand scale as Carnivale. It's a huge show from beginning to end. The Dustbowl is a difficult era to replicate on a weekly basis, but we do our best to capture the conditions and recreate the desperate feeling of hardship.

**HBO:** As Executive Producer, are you pretty much at the nexus of all the decisions?

**HOWARD KLEIN:** Yes, but we have a fantastic team of dedicated, experienced, hardworking and passionate professionals who make the show possible. This is a giant sized production, and we could not do it without the expertise of all the Producers and the brilliant exec's at HBO.

**HBO:** What about when you put on your casting hat? Did you find this a challenging show in that sense?

**HOWARD KLEIN:** [Laughs] It was very challenging. First of all, for the pilot there were about twenty "lead" roles to cast, along with some smaller roles. As the series went on we had some very interesting and specific types to cast. Our job was to find great actors who had the face of the 1930's. The casting process is always challenging anyway. It is not a very black and white thing. You listen to quite a few auditioners for the same part, and then-boom-- someone walks in and you just say, "Wow, that was incredible, the words just came to life." Needless to say I am incredibly proud of the cast we assembled.

**HBO:** You had a happy set?

**HOWARD KLEIN:** Yes, I think we were very fortunate to have a cast and crew that got along amazingly well. I believe everyone connected with the show felt we were involved with something really special. Although the conditions at times were harsh, I know everyone looked forward to coming to work every day on this magical production.

## "Never A Dull Scene"

**William Schmidt**

*Before he became Carnivale's supervising producer, veteran TV writer William Schmidt was already a fan.*

**HBO:** What's does a supervising producer do on a television show?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** Well essentially we're writers who are allowed to produce our own episodes. That means not only do we write the script, but we're involved in casting and editing the final product. It allows us to shape our episodes a little bit in our image.

**HBO:** How did you get involved with Carnivale?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** I had gone in to Carolyn Strauss at HBO with a series pitch. HBO ended up not buying it. But Carolyn called me up about three weeks later to interview for show runner. And so they sent me over the pilot script and the bible. And from the first page, the script just blew me away. There were five days between getting the script and going into the meeting, and I must have spent, oh man, sixteen hours a day reading it, rereading it. You know, feeling what I think the series should be.

So, I went in there extraordinarily prepared. I think I had eight, single-spaced pages of single-spaced notes.

**HBO:** [CHUCKLE]

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** And I didn't get the show runner job, but I got the supervising producer job. And I'll tell you, I've been doing this twenty-one years, and I've won awards and done a lot of nice things. But this is definitely the best material I've ever, ever got to work with.

**HBO:** What do you like so much about it?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** Well the theme of good versus evil, which was also the theme of my series, Prey. But the different variations of it really interest me. I think that good and evil were sort of not talked about for a few years before 9-11. You know, it was sort of like, "Nah, we're too hip to be talking about good and evil."

**HBO:** Hmm.

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** But suddenly with 9-11, everyone started looking around, saying "Yes, there is good and evil." Which I've always believed. Beyond that, just the imagination and talent evident in the pilot script. The characters and the richness of the dialogue--all of it was something I'd never seen before. And man I wanted that job more than anything.

**HBO:** When you're a writer and you have ownership of an idea, is it hard to turn it over to other writers?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** Well you know, that's a really good question. I would say that when I've been on mediocre shows in the past, my ego did say, "Gosh, I don't want to be rewritten by this person, cause I don't think they're a better writer than myself."

But, because I think Dan Knauf is a genius, it's the first show where he takes over, and I can't wait to see what he does with it. I don't think I can ever remember that in my career. I've always been, from the day that I was an arrogant little young pup, a little resentful of anybody rewriting me.

**HBO:** Not anymore?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** Knauf does it better. He's so well grounded in drama. On my first episode, Episode four, he took a good day to rewrite me. And then on my second episode, episode nine, he took two hours. And that was a very proud day.

Dan has such a nice way of including you and making you feel like you're part of his show. It's probably evident from this conversation that we've become very close friends over the last fifteen months. But I think a friendship like that always starts with respect.

**HBO:** Dan obviously has a very firm grip on where the show is going. Does he just give you the guidelines that you need and let you rip a little bit?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** That's exactly it. He has the mileposts: So-and-so's gonna be here at the end of season two. So and so's gonna be there at the end of season three. But within those guideposts--he has a few for each season--there's a great amount of work to do.

*The truth of it is, the American public can take more intelligent shows. But the networks don't give them the credit that HBO does.*

**HBO:** Have there been any big disagreements about where the show is going?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** By big do you mean just atomic or hydrogen explosions....

**HBO:** [CHUCKLE]

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** We had some massive, massive debates in the room. When you're dealing with senior staff people like Dawn and Nicole who are the Co-EP's, Ron Moore, a veteran, Toni Graphia a wonderful writer, it never gets personal. And man, when you have people who've had their own series, and have been in this business as long as all of us have, you're gonna have strong opinions.

**HBO:** Right.

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** We all got together yesterday for the first time since we shut down in July. And it was a very, very warm feeling, because it was like, "Hey, look what we did." You know, it was a very difficult show, and no one had ever done anything like it before, so, you're kind of writing blind sometimes. But for all the long hours and the disagreements and the breakthroughs and the pitfalls, we have something that we're all very proud of.

**HBO:** What were the aspects of it that were hard?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** I think it was going from themes and thoughts to scenes and plot-lines. It was a lot harder in the first six episodes than

it was for the back six. It's sort of like popcorn. We build up a lot in the first six episodes and then everything starts popping. There're no slow moments cause you have to watch every scene.

Just before the season started, I just happened to see all twelve episodes back to back over two days. I was really impressed; it picks up pace just like you'd expect a novel to. By the end it's like, holy mackerel, zoom, zoom, zoom, zoom. You know, scene, scene, scene, scene, scene. Oh my god, that happens; oh my god, that happens.

That's why I don't think this could have been done on another network. Because, you have to have people who are into the patience of a really intelligent television show. And, the truth of it is that the American public can take more of this. [CHUCKLE] But the networks don't give them the credit that HBO does.

*I think that good and evil were sort of not talked about for few years before 9-11. It was sort of like, "Nah, we're too hip to be talking about good and evil."*

**HBO:** Are there moments in the episodes that you've worked on that really stand out to you?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** There are so many interesting moments in this season. The one thing that I love about the show is the carnival. I've

never seen a carnival dramatized in quite this way, with the little moments. In episode nine, for example, the carnival's in such deep trouble financially, that they play what they call a fireball show, which means basically they want to take the chumps for everything they're worth, even if they have to pick pockets or cheat on games or, whatever. When you research these things and then dramatize them, the magic moments are really, really cool.

**HBO:** Is there a character that you find yourself drawn to?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** I can't say that there's one. I really love them all. As a TV writer-- and I've done something like thirteen shows--almost every script you write gets to the place where it's like, oh man, I just don't want to write that scene. It could be you're going away from writing something exciting to write a necessary family scene and you just feel like it's gonna be boring as sin, and you grit your teeth and do your best. Here there was never any of that. There was never some dull scene that I had to write. There's never a dull character that you just have to get through just to get to the good stuff.

I do have an affinity for Justin. But Sofie and Ben, they're all great.

**HBO:** It's the writer who's not the atheist who's drawn to Justin.

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** Yeah. [CHUCKLE] Exactly. Exactly. I find writing his stuff really, really exciting. Because one of the things we've

been trying to do is that if Ben is the good avatar, then he has a lot of evil in him like the rest of us do. If he's the evil avatar, he has a lot of good in him, like the rest of us do. And we're trying to do that with all the characters. Justin is good and he's evil. So there's a question of free choice and the exigencies of the times and how that turns you more evil or more good. You know--it brings out those little seeds in you that, that are obviously buried deep. But the choices you make dictate who you are.

**HBO:** You mentioned research; did you find yourself caught up in researching the Depression and the wars and all that kind of thing?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** Oh yeah. When I was a kid, my favorite show was *The Waltons*. I was a poor kid growing up in a crappy little town, so it was no wonder that that's a series I latched onto.

I was already kind of interested in the Depression times. And I'm a nut about reading about the evils of Nazism and the all that. This is a show that you can do as much research on as you want. You could spend seven days a week, twenty four hours a day, and you're not gonna be done.

**HBO:** Right.

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** And that's fun for me. One of the things that we're very proud of is dialog that's true to the times. I did a lot of

research into the slang of the 1930s. There's a line in episode four where Lila is basically saying that Ben would be easy to get to, and instead of saying that she says, "I knew he'd be a ripe suck." It's like, wow that was a time when people were more literate. And less homogenized. You had very colorful regional expressions.

**HBO:** It seems like a time when people aspired to cleverness.

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** Verbal cleverness. That's right. And that's not to put down our age, because we're very image-oriented, thanks to television. But yeah, the wordplay of an S.J. Pearlman is infinitely more interesting than Howard Stern's language, in my opinion.

**HBO:** So if you look back at all of the episodes, what is the theme of season one?

**WILLIAM SCHMIDT:** At the end of the day I think it is about alienation. You know, and about loneliness. Everybody in this environment, on both sides of the story, from California and in the dustbowl, they ultimately have to fall back on themselves to survive.

And how do you reach out to another human being? Ultimately it's easier sometimes to reach out to a tremendous outsider like the freaks, because they're all outsiders. I wasn't cognizant of it in the writing. But when I watched the episodes back to back to back, I felt

like, oh wow, these are lonely people striving desperately to break through their inhibitions, to get through to one another.

And you know, the fact is that many of them don't succeed at it, and that some do, but on levels that aren't always dramatized. I mean it's not big hugs and stuff like that. It can be a very nuanced type of stuff between, say, Samson and Jonesy. You know, they don't tell each other their feelings-it's more like, "Hey, have a snort," and they pass the bottle. I love that. Again, it was not planned. I think it just came out of the trueness that we ended up getting to--of the time and the carnival itself. You know, there's a real bittersweet quality to it.

## "Mood Music"

Jeff Beal

*JEFF BEAL's complex and haunting score feels like a natural part of Carnivàle's world. But does it offer clues to the storylines?*

**HBO:** Carnivàle's score isn't your typical supernatural thriller music. What did you set out to do with the score?

**JEFF BEAL:** I think one thing that I've tried very hard to do is to create almost a three dimensionality to the music. I think it helps tell the story, because obviously the characters are that way, and the acting and so many other elements are on that level. It's not a one-dimensional show.

It's funny, if you look at Amy Madigan's character--I love her performance as Iris--it was really interesting; she didn't have a lot to do in the first few episodes. There were just these few shots of her kind of reacting to Justin. But as I was writing, I finally started finding

the center of Justin's world, and all of the sudden, I understood all of her performances. [LAUGHS]

It's the kind of synergy you always hope for between a music and pictures. This show was really fun because it's just visually stunning, you know, on a whole lot of levels-- production design and directing and performance.

**HBO:** Can you tell us a little about the process of scoring Carnivàle?

**JEFF BEAL:** Usually, we'll sit down after an episode is fully edited, or close to fully edited, with Howard and the rest of our crew, my music editor, Jenny, and the music supervisors and we'll go through what's called a 'spotting session.' We'll watch the whole episode through and take notes; a lot of times we'll stop and talk about a scene. Quite often the editors will put in temp music, just to kind of give an example of where maybe music should go, and maybe even what emotional tone the music should have.

*I used to play a lot of jazz improvisation with groups. And I realized at some point, that scoring was a very similar creative experience for me, in the sense that I'm trying to kind of play along with the actors.*

**HBO:** Right.

**JEFF BEAL:** So then I'll go back to my studio and start writing, send out tapes to both HBO and Howard and then get notes back.

**HBO:** And you find watching the actors influences your work?

**JEFF BEAL:** Oh definitely. That's one of the things that I get excited about. I used to play a lot of jazz improvisation with groups. And I realized at some point, when I had gotten more into scoring, that it was very much a similar creative experience for me, in the sense that I'm trying to kind of play along with the actors.

I very much believe in the power of performance and trying to enhance and expand on that, but not get in its way.

So yeah I very much get involved with actors and what they're doing, and I try to get a sense of their rhythm.

**HBO:** Do you think your jazz background influences your work?

**JEFF BEAL:** Oh, absolutely. The jazz part of my background has served me very well as a film composer.

Just the ability to improvise, and it's also very collaborative art form, you have to be a good listener and you have to be attentive to what other people are doing.

I also love classical music, and obviously 'Carnivàle' is a great show for anybody that loves literate music, because there are so many great opportunities where the grand gesture is what's called for.

**HBO:** Do the characters on Carnivàle each have their own musical themes?

**JEFF BEAL:** Yeah, early on I realized that this would be really effective for the show, because it has so many characters. It kind of keeps it straight, in a way.

One thing that's enjoyable about the show is that because there're no commercials, it's paced much more like a movie. And a lot of the characters have long scenes where I was able to develop themes. Obviously in the pilot I was able to get things going for Ben and Justin. But later on, in episode four, "Black Blizzard", Lodz becomes a very important character, and I was able to do something for him. We even created something for Apollonia because I really wanted Clea to have a little something for her to play against while she's in the room with her mom. It just became this kind of fun little leitmotif that represents the conversations that they have.

**HBO:** What do you try to accomplish with a theme for, say, Justin?

**JEFF BEAL:** One of the things that's interesting about that character is that he's written in such a way that you kind of get caught up in

him. You almost empathize with his own personal seduction and discovery of his powers, and I was really intrigued by that.

Just from a musical point of view--specifically because it deals with this kind of religious zeal-- I wanted the audience to not just be pushed away by him but actually get caught up in what he was doing. So I was very conscious from the first episode on, to make the music about his delusion of grandeur and sense of self-importance.

I was actually really pleased because I read some of the message boards to see where people were registering emotionally with Justin, and I was really happy to see that they hadn't really decided, morally, where he stood.

*Carnivàle is very much a mood piece. It's almost like method acting. I try to scare myself and creep myself out while I'm working on this show.*

**HBO:** What about Ben?

**JEFF BEAL:** One of the first things I spoke with Howard Klein about was the idea that we really wanted to have different music to represent the two different worlds of the two story lines.

So it became clear that Brother Justin's world was kind of this really big construct of almost operatic scales. And religious music--trumpet,

organ, voices. An orchestral sound. Very full and realized, whereas when you get over to the carnival side, things are much more deconstructed and kind of mystical.

**HBO:** These people have different influences in their lives--Brother Justin is from Russia and Lodz is from Eastern Europe. Do you try to get those influences into the score?

**JEFF BEAL:** Yeah, very much so. I mean part of the fun of writing a score like this is that it's enough to evoke something, without hitting the nail on the head. And we have great music supervisors who are able to really establish the sound of the time. So I'm alluding to that, but the score also has to exist on the very mythic level.

In our modern, kind of clinical, very rational world, we a lot of times don't acknowledge the more mystical side of our experience. And one of the things that's really fun about the show is trying to kind of make that palpable, and have an audience kind of feel that. It also brings up another interesting question: why do we put music in movies?

[LAUGHS]

**HBO:** [LAUGHS]

**JEFF BEAL:** I always feel like there is some emotional reason for having music in there. I think if it doesn't work on that level, it's better off not there. But the emotional content of a show like *Carnivàle* is

very murky a lot of the time. And we're not trying to spell out too much for the audience. Not telling them how to feel, as much as we're just trying to help them, experience the kind of mood that's happening.

**HBO:** We're going to get the message boards buzzing with this, but you've said that if you listen to the characters' themes, there are even hints about their relationships.

**JEFF BEAL:** Yeah, and now that I've finished writing up through episode twelve, there are even more. Some of them work as kind of happy coincidences, but some of them were intentional. Some of them won't even be revealed in the first season.

**HBO:** Can you give us a hint?

**JEFF BEAL:** Well, the character Management, for example-there are some elements that play in his scenes which also play in the dream sequences, which in a very obtuse way, connect two characters. And, especially in episode twelve, there are some scenes with Lodz and Apollonia that help connect Apollonia to another character in the piece. I don't want to say too much other than that...

**HBO:** Now that you've got all twelve in the can, can you pick out a couple of moments or scenes that you feel particularly happy with?

**JEFF BEAL:** I'd say there're definitely a few that stand in my mind. One of my favorites was the beginning of episode three, when there's this long funeral procession that goes into town. It's this two minute montage of just music, basically... and I wrote a little tune for that which eventually became a theme that I used to kind of represent the carnie's world.

And that came back in a pretty prominent way for the scene of Dora Mae's funeral--which was a lot of fun because it was unlike the more spooky parts of the show. It was just a place that needed something really beautiful.

**HBO:** Hmm.

**JEFF BEAL:** And, of course, we also have these dream sequences, which are a whole other world. A lot of the sounds that I originally wrote for those scenes I was able to use for other elements. It was also really fun to develop the whole sound for Management. Management's a very important character, and yet there's a question as to whether or not there's even something there. So there's this combination of these detuned trumpet phrases, and some low, ambient things, and stuff like that.

And then, one of my favorites still probably would go back to Ben in the pilot, when he helps the woman with the dead baby. You know, that was just a really wonderful, beautiful scene.

**HBO:** It's interesting how you often refer to other kinds of "sounds" besides music in your score...

**JEFF BEAL:** Right, well Carnivàle is very much a mood piece. And you know, it's almost like method acting. I try to scare myself and creep myself out while I'm working on this show.

**HBO:** [LAUGHS]

**JEFF BEAL:** You know what I mean? And sometimes literal musical elements don't work as well as more obtuse musical elements. So that kind of puts you into the whole realm of sound design musical color, musical atmospheres, which I had a lot of fun with developing on the show.

You know, I did the movie Pollack several years ago and before I did that I never really had an analogy for the way I like to work, but it's very much like painting in the sense that you're kind of trying to layer things, and deal with color and composition.

**HBO:** Have you thought about where you would go in the future of the show?

**JEFF BEAL:** I hope that we get to do another season because I feel like musically we've kind of set the stage and you know it'd be really

fun to see where all this goes, especially the interaction, you know?  
One of the things I tried to build into this score was this sense that once the worlds of Ben and Justin start to clash, that we can have a musical kind of conversation between those two musics, which I think would be really fun to do.

**"Michael J. Anderson"**

*"If not for the carnival, these people may have found no place in this world at all."*

*The man who plays Samson, the diminutive onetime strongman at the center of an epic struggle, talks about avatars, prophets and life among freaks.*

**HBO.COM:** Tell us about Samson.

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** Well, he runs the carnival. And the Dust Bowl, it was a hard world; it was a tough place to survive. A lot of people didn't, and as a result, the ones that did sometimes had to make some tough choices. Samson makes those tough choices...

He does what he does for the benefit of the people of the carnival. But, there is hardly nothing he won't do that in that pursuit.

**HBO.COM:** Is Samson a mentor for Ben?

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** Well, Ben is really caught up in greater powers. But he's sort of lost and confused. He doesn't know really who he is, or why he has any of these abilities. And neither does Samson. But, because they share that degree of confusion, they're able to piece it out together, sharing and comparing what information they have been able to gather. So, he's not so much a mentor that

reveals the secret so much as he provides a way to discover the secrets.

**HBO.COM:** How does Samson deal with other members of the troupe?

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** The rest of the carnival is a diverse group with many, many differing value perspectives. Samson, a lot of the time, is just juggling things, trying to keep one component from smashing into another. Keeping it balanced, in the midst of extreme adversity. But, of course, that's, a strong point for Samson, dealing with adversity. That's probably what puts him in the position that he's in---that he's one of the few people that can move between all these different paradigms without disturbing his own.

**HBO.COM:** When Ben joins the carnival, you guys were originally on a circuit headed north, then this kid comes along, and all of a sudden you're going south?

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** Well, I take orders from the secret Management. There's a character in the management trailer who only speaks to Samson. And, a lot of people aren't even sure that he exists; they think it might just be a trick Samson uses to stay in control of the carnival. And when we encounter Ben, we know that he has something to do with good and evil avatars.

**HBO.COM:** Does the carnival serve as a home for Ben?

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** Yes, but I'd say it's a very tenuous relationship. We always have the feeling that he's ready to light out and disappear, or just stay in the town where we're set up. He seems always ready to leave. But, then, he never quite does.

**HBO.COM:** So as a leader of this troupe of misfits, what is the most difficult challenge that you face?

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** I think when Samson rose to the position he is in, it was greater than a dream come true for him. It was more than he had been led to expect he would ever get out of his life. And so he's determined to stay in that position. So don't you get in his way, there's just very little he would not do, because he sees the alternative as unthinkable.

**HBO.COM:** And does that feeling hold true for the other characters, the freaks, as well?

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** Exactly, if it not for the carnival, a lot of these people may have found no place in this world at all. So I think they cling to the carnival and to each other. It's a clinging to survival; it's a clinging to life.

**HBO.COM:** What about your background, what do we know about that?

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** Samson originally joined a circus, as the strong man--hence the name Samson. But now, he's a little older, he's not the circus performer type anymore. The mystical background of Samson is still rather in question; there is evidence to support connections to both sides.

**HBO.COM:** Let's talk about your relationship with some of the carnies.

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** OK

**HBO.COM:** Lodz. What's going on, what is going on there? You guys seem to have some kind of a back history.

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** He's got his own agenda. At times, it corresponds with Samson's agenda, but more often than not, it very much doesn't.

And, on one hand, Samson is able to deal with him because he has the respect and the control of the carnival. On the other hand, Lodz sees things that no man can see, that Samson could never guess. And he uses those things to his advantage.

He trips Samson up all the time, not just with his secret visions, but, because he's a devious strategist. Samson is no dummy, but he's not a political wiz.

**HBO.COM:** And what about Jonesy? You guys have a little power struggle.

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** Well, I see it as a similar to the relationship between Management and Samson. Management sort of pulled him out of a dire strait and gave him something worthwhile.

Jones is an injured baseball player. He's seen some glory days, but as an injured baseball player, there's not much left for him.

And he was a boozier when Samson picked him up and dusted him off. He gave him another chance; he gave him a place to be useful, and a place to be respected, very much like Samson got from Management. And I think there's probably that same degree of loyalty, a clinging to life an if-not-here-I'm-sunk kind of feeling between Jones and Samson. And Jonesy can get things done, so they're a good team.

**HBO.COM:** What about Lila?

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** Lila is, she is flirtatious. She is sneaky. She has a relationship with Lodz which is similar to some of the ones

I've described. I mean, it's somewhat erotic; she's elevated by her connection to Lodz. Lodz is elevated by his connection to her. I think that Lila has more options than the rest of the people in the carnival. She could shave the beard and integrate herself, but her wild point of view, her eccentric paradigm won't allow her to live a normal life.

**HBO.COM:** And Gecko?

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** Again, he's somebody that's propelled into the life with no choice, but who really loves it and flourishes there. He's one of the few, comedic elements also--he has an amusing point of view, and he is very entertaining in expressing it.

**HBO.COM:** What has it been like on the set of Carnivale?

**MICHAEL J. ANDERSON:** It has been one of the greatest experiences of my life, and everybody has been really great. And I'm looking forward to doing many, many more. The atmosphere...the ambience and the message. I mean-- aside from the good and evil-- just the diversity. It's something that I really feel comfortable and at home with. I love being associated with it.

**"Clancy Brown"**

*Carnivàle's Brother Justin talks about the unsettled world of thirties, the battle between Light and Dark and the powers that make his character different from other men.*

**HBO.COM:** Tell us about the premise of *Carnivàle* from your character's perspective.

**CLANCY BROWN:** Well, throughout the history of man, there has been a constant struggle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. God and the Devil have decided to wage this war on Earth - with human proxies. Occasionally, these two avatars of light and

darkness meet. And subsequently, a Dark Age or an Age of Enlightenment ensues.

This is the story of the final confrontation, between these two entities, the final battle between God and Satan, for the soul of man. And, well, we are the products of that battle. So, you decide, who won or who lost. Are we creatures of light, or are we creatures of darkness? We'll tell you, in the show. But you have to stick around - for the whole thing. [LAUGHTER]

**HBO.COM:** Give us some background on your character, Brother Justin.

**CLANCY BROWN:** Brother Justin is an immigrant. He and his sister, Iris, were taken in by a man of the cloth - Norman Balthus - and raised in the shadow of the church, and the crucifix, and things holy. But he has harbored the knowledge that he is different than other men, because of certain abilities that he has. And he doesn't know why he has them, or what their purpose is. But because of his training, the default position is that it is God - God's will, and God speaking to him.

Instinctively though, as we all do, he knows when his darker side is taking over. And there is definitely a dark impulse in him. And so, that

creates some confusion and psychosis, trying to determine what his destiny is.

**HBO.COM:** And is he aware of his powers?

**CLANCY BROWN:** He is aware of his powers. He just doesn't know - what their meaning is. You know, he is a metaphor for all of us, in that we do have these dark impulses. We do have the reptilian side of our brain. And that creates in him a need to explain this. He is very much a metaphor for our constant battle --to be good people, or impulsive people, you know?

**HBO.COM:** How is that applicable, to what's going on in the world in the early thirties?

**CLANCY BROWN:** Well, it's the time of my father's youth. And my father put it very well once: he said that, for the first time in human history, a father could not with confidence say to his child, "I know what the world is going to be like."

So the undermining of that authority, the authority of the elderly, started then, because the world just began to change at such a pace. It used to be that a son could look at the father, and pretty much know what life was gonna be like as an adult. There was confidence in that, and comfort in that, and frustration also. But for the first time, in the early decades of the century, a previous generation could not guarantee the future of the next generation. And there was going to

be a generation of disenfranchised people, that were just gonna blow away in the dust; the dust of the dustbowl. And the next generation is gonna go on, and create something that has never been seen before.

And I know that feeling now, because I look at my daughter, and I just have no idea what the world is gonna look like, when she is my age.

**HBO.COM:** The story seems to have a lot of ambiguity to it. Does any character really know who he is?

**CLANCY BROWN:** No. Even to themselves. None of these characters are really what they seem. And none of 'em really know who they are - or the role that they are playing. All of them seem to be aware that they are players in some drama. But, that makes sense, in a way, because it's a carnival. And things are never what they seem, even to the to the denizens of the carnie.

**HBO.COM:** Let's talk about the scene in the pilot where Eleanor spews the coins out of her mouth. Are you forcing her to do it?

**CLANCY BROWN:** No. It's this ability that overtakes him, actually. It kinda happens in moments of stress. It happens in moments of fury, really. And, you know, it reaches inside somebody, and causes pain and misery - and truth - to reveal itself. And that's a harsh thing to have happen.

Just imagine, if you were walking along the street, and all of a sudden, you were assailed with everyone's demons, you know? Somebody walking by you, and you know what their dark secret is; the most horrible thing in their experiences. That'll turn your head around a little bit. And especially for somebody like Justin, who is raised in the world of the New Testament and visions of love and light and generosity and humility.

**HBO.COM:** Well, on the conscious level, what would you say Brother Justin's intentions are?

**CLANCY BROWN:** Brother Justin's intentions are to spread the good word. He is a trained and talented preacher, a man of God. And that's the path that he has chosen, that's the calling he is hearing.

**HBO.COM:** We know you can't reveal what's going to happen...

**CLANCY BROWN:** I am just dying to see what happens next.

[LAUGHTER] You know? I know everything that's gonna happen this year. And I just can't wait to see what happens next year.

[LAUGHTER] I am just dying to see it.

**"Amy Madigan"**

*"Iris wants to see her brother succeed in every way, shape or form, and, and he has an enormous amount of power and charisma."*

*Her portrayal brings eerie power to the dowdy Iris Crowe. So what makes Brother Justin's devoted sister tick?*

**HBO.COM:** Carnivale includes a lot of supernatural elements. Does your character have any powers?

**AMY MADIGAN:** I really feel that it's not the time to tell you. Iris's character does not have the powers that the two main characters in this story do, but there are other people who kind of...have an ancillary ability. So, it'll be interesting to kind of see how it develops in that sense...

**HBO.COM:** Right.

**AMY MADIGAN:** Iris is basically going to turn into a superhero next season. [LAUGHS]

**HBO.COM:** With a cape?

**AMY MADIGAN:** No, it'll be a much more modest outfit. [LAUGHS]  
Get a good look at my outfit, this is my little voodoo girl outfit, that I wear at all times. I'm going to take Iris home with me, and bring her out, when I need her. [LAUGHS]

**HBO.COM:** The series also has a certain ambiguity to it--people are not always what they seem to be. How does this apply to your character?

**AMY MADIGAN:** I think it's very much like life. If somebody acts on something, are they acting on the truth, or what they...perceive it to be?

I think that that, those lines kind of move to the right or to the left, depending on what you're involved with. As Iris, I love my brother more than anybody or anything in the world, and I would do anything for him, so certainly my perimeters might be a little stretched out as, as opposed to somebody else. But that's who I am with him.

**HBO.COM:** Does Iris have any goals herself? Or does she just help Justin?

**AMY MADIGAN:** Iris wants to see her brother succeed in every way, shape or form, and, and he has an enormous amount of power and charisma. We're in America, so boy, you can go as far as you want, can't you? Iris wants it for him--certainly she's going to be a part of it, but she believes that he is here for a real reason. Not just to be the good guy on the side, but to take command, take control, take charge, lead hundreds of thousands of people in the way of God.

**HBO.COM:** How about the other storyline, the carnies. Do you see Iris interacting with the carnival?

**AMY MADIGAN:** Well, not yet. I'm looking forward to learning the trapeze, and also being involved in a little juggling, possibly next year. No, no, no... [LAUGHS]. But the two stories kind of make some strange sense with each other. I think our characters are finally going to kind of come together, in some way, which I'm really looking forward to. It could be Armageddon, or a love fest.

**HBO.COM:** How would you describe your experience on the set of Carnivale?

**AMY MADIGAN:** Ah, it's an enormous undertaking, because it is a period piece, and there's so much going on, there are so many stories. But everybody's quite involved with it, and it's pretty extraordinary casting, and a really unbelievable bunch of writers. I

think you'll like the show if you have some sensibility of the spooky side of things. It's very strange, it's very real, it's opera, it's great fun, it's bloody...it's all those things that you're looking for. [LAUGHS]  
Good sex... [LAUGHS] and ah...you'll just have to tune in and see.