

'Claws' Star Carrie Preston talks Sisterhood, Roller's Return and Getting Kinky with Dr. Ken

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Article contains spoilers

Manatee County-set TNT series *Claws* just got the shock of a lifetime, when Roller ([Jack Kesy](#)) rose from the dead, and returned to wreak havoc on his family and friends. After being patched up and held captive by an insane swamp lady, Roller managed to not only escape death, but his eerily satisfying situation with Gladys. He immediately went to Nail Artisan, greeted (or should I say tormented) Desna ([Niecy Nash](#)), Polly ([Carrie Preston](#)), Quiet Ann ([Judy Reyes](#)), Jen ([Jenn Lyon](#)), and Virginia ([Karrueche Tran](#)), who were all mutually shocked and terrified at his unexpected resurrection. With a new look, and new attitude, Roller claimed he suffered from a bout of amnesia, although, we're all pretty convinced he was faking it, and only when it was convenient expressed integral details to Uncle Daddy ([Dean Norris](#)) about his attempted murder. He ultimately revealed that the Russians were the ones who took a hit out on him... Phew, you're safe for now, ladies.

Amongst the corruption, family drama, and mob wars, the show undoubtedly revolves around its heart, Desna and her divas: five resourceful manicurist brought together by diversity, and an unbreakable bond. One of those divas is none other than Polly, a whimsical character played by the incomparable Carrie Preston. Though Polly shares some uncanny qualities as Preston's well-known character Elsbeth on *The Good Wife*, this ex-convict in *Claws* is miles apart from her alter-ego lawyer roots on the iconic CBS series. From hustling a money grubbing housewife to interrogating the Russian Mafia, Preston's Polly is a multi-layered goldmine. With every passing installment we get to know the calm, cool and collected red-head a tad bit more, and man- we're so into her!

Photo by Vince Truspin

Fan Fest News recently spoke with Preston about her role on the overnight sensation, and the transition from Elsbeth to Polly. We chatted about nails, Polly's budding (and kinky) relationship with Dr. Ken ([Jason Antoon](#)), and how to become a ride or die member of her crew. Spoiler alert: I'm part of her crew now, so don't mess with me, or she will cut a b*tch.

Without further ado...

MCKENZIE MORRELL: *Claws* is definitely my new favorite summer show. I think everybody should be tuning in. That being said, can you tell the people out there who aren't watching the show, what it's about and a little bit about the character that you play?

CARRIE PRESTON: *Claws* is about five women in a Florida nail salon who are involved with money laundering with the mafia so if that doesn't capture people I don't know what will. My character Polly has just been released from prison for identify theft. She's a very complicated character as are all the characters in the show. The central characters are all women which is an exciting combination and characters to find on television nowadays. We're very diverse and all have our own histories and character quirks and I think audiences are really loving getting to know all of these women.

MM: I'll be honest, when we first met your character she seemed very out of place like the girls were trying to hide from this crazy, Stepford wife lady but it turns out that Polly was an integral part of the crew. Why do you think these women work so well together despite all their differences?

CP: The common denominator is Desna. She brought all these women together and created this family. I think the reason that they work is because she is at the helm. They are all supportive of each other and they all come from damaged and flawed backgrounds. But they're there to see each other through that and to hold each other up and not tear each other down.

MM: The show does an exceptional job balancing that drama with the comedy. Do you think that *Claws* would pack that potent punch if you were to remove one of those from the equation if it were straight drama or straight comedy.

CP: For me, what compels me to watch me and intrigues me as an actor is finding the drama in the comedy and finding the comedy in the drama. This show does both. And the tension keeps the audience on their toes and us on our toes as actors and the writers on their toes as well. When you have all of those elements in place, it just makes for a very interesting viewing situation and a pleasure as well.

Photo Credit: TNT

MM: Definitely, I'm hooked on this series. I can not wait for season two. Obviously for your character, I would hope you love playing this character and we recently learned that Polly is a compulsive liar but we still love her despite her shady past. What do you think gives Polly

the X-factor and why people still root for her?

CP: I think people are surprised by her and want to see what she has up her sleeve next. She's an identity thief not just in the practical sense but in the metaphorical sense too. She steals people's personalities and their voices. At least that's how I'm choosing to play her. To delight the audience and keep them wanting more, at least that's what I hope. It's amusing as well as interesting to see how she's going to get out of a situation, what tactics she's going to employ.

MM: What other stuff she has up her sleeve?

CP: Yeah.

MM: Did you have a favorite scene to shoot? I know when you were helping Desna and Virginia plant the money in the adoptive parents house that was a totally different side of the character we haven't seen. Was that a fun thing to shoot?

CP: That was really fun. In the script, it didn't really talk about how Polly was going to handle the dog. As a matter of fact, I think they had Polly tasing the dog and I thought that wasn't as fun as something that would shed more light on the character so I pitched to them that maybe Polly had some experience with dog training in the past and it would be another thing we learn about her in this situation. It was my idea to have her turn around and speak German to the dog and wear an all black prowler outfit. I saw it as an opportunity to educate the audience a little more about Polly's past without even talking about it, just doing it all visually.

MM: That was so brilliant. Obviously the fans are questioning if there is some love on the horizon for Polly after that kinky moment between her and Doctor Ken recently. Any hopes that we'll see some romantic relationships unravelling?

CP: I can say Polly likes to keep people on their toes and Dr. Ken is just the next one standing in her line of vision. You'll just have to tune in and see what develops between them but I think the seeds were definitely planted in that moment when Polly slaps him across the face.

MM: Your character notices inconsistency with people around her, probably because she's a damn good liar and you have to be in tune with that sort of behavior. At what point do you think she realized something was off between Desna and Virginia and the web of lies that they had going on over there?

CP: As subtle as it was, Polly indicated to the audience that she knew something was up with Virginia in the pilot. The minute she meets her she knows something is wrong and she's going to keep her eye on it. Anybody that's going to try to come in and join this very tight knit crew, these women are going to treat cautiously, and Polly has the strongest radar for someone who is not on the up and up. She's a liar a manipulator and can peg a liar and a manipulator.

MM: She was right in tune with that. I was like "she knows more than she's letting on" and when she showed up I was like "yes." If anyone was going to be brought into the fold I was glad it was her because she was one of my favorites on the show. What do you admire most about this character?

CP: She has resilience that I admire. She's creating a life for herself in a way that I wouldn't use but I admire how tenacious she is about making a life for herself.

MM: That's kind of the common theme is that everyone is trying to make a life for themselves and the way they do it may be non-conventional but they're doing their best to make it.

CP: Exactly.

MM: Have you faced any challenges in this role that you haven't faced yet in your acting career. You play these eccentric, quirky, multi-layered characters so well. It's interesting to hear if you have any challenges while playing these characters?

CC: They're all challenging but in a good way. I like to complicate my characters and take them on the page and use that as the first layer and deepen it with my own sense of what the character's back story is or if she's making a choice that isn't the most obvious one. Working with the writers to elevate and flesh out what they've put on the page. I think it's way more fun to make choices that aren't the most obvious ones. That's always a challenge but something I really enjoy doing.

MM: Well you execute it perfectly so job well done. Who do you think would win in a throw down, Uncle Daddy or Polly and what would be her weapon of choice?

CP: Polly would definitely win in a battle of wits or brains. Not that Uncle Daddy isn't bright but he's more brawn than brains and Polly has brains and brawn so I would think it would be a good match.



Photo Credit: TNT

MM: It would be interesting to see that unfold. Did you anticipate what kind of reaction Desna and the rest of the girls would react to finding out that Roller isn't dead after all?

CP: You can imagine it was going to be pretty overwhelming. It's going to change the tone of things for them and the stakes are going to be raised for everyone concerned, already at the end of the big episode, Jen has realized that her husband killed the wrong people. Revelations are happening that are going to change the dynamic within the group.

MM: That's going to be super interesting to see unfold considering there are such high stakes and they've done so many things they can't come back from. Obviously people know you from *True Blood*, *The Good Wife*, and *The Good Fight*. Are those fans carrying over to *Claws*? Do you see people reacting to the show on twitter and social media?

CP: Yes. Social media is lit up every time we air the show which is pretty exciting because so many people aren't watching shows in real time. It's great to see that people are wanting to watch the show when it airs despite the competition. And I'm finding that there is a lot of crossover with my *True Blood* fans. It's the same type of summer show I think. People love the fantastical element of *True Blood* and I think they're loving the same type of vibe on *Claws*. Even out in the world I'm noticing people are coming up to me and complimenting me on *Claws* first. So that's a paradigm shift. Usually it's for *The Good Wife* or *True Blood*. There are some people who have never seen either of those shows and are coming straight at me for *Claws* so it's fun and I'm excited that people are enjoying it so much.

MM: And it's good you're getting some new fans because people who maybe found you from watching *Claws* are like "hey who is this awesome person" and doing some digging and watching the other shows you're well known for. It must be cool getting a kind of reverse fan base.

CP: It is! It is. It's kind of surprising. I didn't expect anyone to do that. I was thinking it would be my main core fan base but it's really exciting that that's expanding. We have so much great television on right now so it's a compliment that people are gravitating toward *Claws*.

MM: I like to throw in a fun, off the cuff question into all of my interviews. Are you ready? If you had to construct a donut based on Polly's personality, what kind of donut would it be and what kind of toppings would be on it?

CP: Did you say Donut!? Okay, let's see. It would definitely be a cake donut, I think because those are more complicated and rich which I think Polly is. The toppings would be numerous. We would probably start with a glaze and add some rainbow sprinkles in honor of how colorful she is and how many colors she shows, then probably a healthy dose of nuts.

MM: That's perfect. I guess to conclude, TNT has renewed *Claws* for season two, which we are so happy about. Why should people continue to tune in? What is something you could maybe tease?

CP: Well the show has this wonderful plot at the center of it but really the heart of the show is the characters and getting to know them and understanding them from episode to episode. You'll start to feel like you're part of their crew when you watch the show and I think for those who haven't tuned in yet, they're going to find a sisterhood the minute they start hanging out with these women and I hope that sisterhood is going to keep them watching.

CLAWS airs on TNT Sunday's at 9/8c

