

'Wynonna Earp' Star Katherine Barrell on Exposing Gooverly, and Officer Haught's Slight Shift in Season 2

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SyFy's bold hit series *Wynonna Earp* is keeping things #WayHaught in the tiny town of Purgatory with fan-favorite couple Waverly ([Dominique Provost-Chalkley](#)) and Nicole ([Katherine Barrell](#)). Despite being kept out of the Black Badge Division, taunted by the town's resident weirdo, and being manipulated by Demon Goo-infested Earp sisters, Officer Nicole Haught finally (thank the Donut Gods) received some long overdue affirmation from Sheriff Nedley ([Greg Lawson](#)), who revealed he'd been priming the young deputy to take over as Sheriff once he retires. It's about damn time!

Nedley's life-changing announcement came at the perfect time, since Nicole has felt slighted and less than useful lately, since the BBD door slammed shut on her curious and eager mind. Katherine Barrell, who plays the spunky and driven officer, was kind enough to chat with me while on vacation about Season 2's big reveal and what's to come for her character as she continues to navigate a crumbling Purgatory.



Since Black Badge seems to be subtly going up in flames and the town has yet to face Tucker Gardner ([Caleb Ellsworth-Clark](#)) and his sadistic plans to torment his fellow citizens

on his quest for a girlfriend, I mean, can't he just get a Buffy bot like the rest of the weird nerds do? Everything inside me is telling me Twisted Tuck is after Waverly Earp... which won't end well if Wynonna ([Melanie Scrofano](#)) and Officer Haught can team up to save their girl. Clearly I'm holding out for this dynamic duo... don't judge me. I've got goals.

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But make no mistake, Barrell explains exactly how Nicole feels when it comes to her dissatisfaction with her career, new relationship jitters, and developing a good bond with the woman she loves' sister. From sweet Haught to sassy Haught, this seasoned actor enlightens us on her character's slight shift and what it means for our faves moving forward.

MCKENZIE MORRELL: Season two of *Wynonna Earp* finally dropped. We were waiting impatiently for it and we're so glad it's back. Can you tell us about Nicole and where her story might be headed for the remainder of the season?

KATHERINE BARRELL: Okay so, for Nicole in season two, you see her kind of in a different light than in season one. In season one we saw a calm, collected Nicole who always has the right answers for everything and was always on top of everything and very in control. Then we get to season two and we find she's been kept out of Black Badge which was something she really wanted to be a part of and it was a really big deal for her, especially as a cop trying to move up. That was that big promotion, that big step forward in her career. We see that taken away from her and it's really hard for her at first. You see a side of Nicole that's really frustrated and feeling let down especially because she's got this new relationship with Waverly who is still involved in Black Badge. It's hard for her because she's surrounded by it so she can't get away from it but she can't do anything about it.

MM: Sounds like there's some tension there.

KB: It's this tricky balance of wanting to help and knowing exactly what's going on and wanting to be a part of what Waverly is doing but also having no choice but to have to step away. So it's definitely creating some tension and frustration for her. Then of course at the end of episode three, we see Nicole have this beautiful conversation with Nedley and he tells her that the reason he plucked her specifically from the city and recruited her to Purgatory is because he's grooming her to make her Sheriff. It's this really lovely turning point for her because she's reminded by Nedley that it's important to be a good cop. It's a great reality check of why she got into police work in the first place, to take care of people, not monsters, not demons, people. It's a really lovely moment for her. And I think moving forward, she's still trying to walk that balance. It can be a struggle for her to pass on the Black Badge cases to Waverly and the team without feeling that sense of jealousy and resentment. But we see Nicole step up in other ways she didn't expect and break the rules a little bit, where as before she was a really rules driven person.

MM: Back in episode two we see Nicole feeling like being the cop isn't as exciting as being a part of Black Badge. Now that she knows she's being groomed to be the top dog in the town, protector of humans and such... do you think that will change her outlook or will that previous resentment linger while they live in separate worlds?

KB: Definitely. I can totally identify with her feeling of being in a hamster wheel and never going forward in her career. She has this sense of "if it wasn't for Waverly, maybe I'll leave. I'm not moving up, I'm not learning anything, I'm not being pushed, so why am I here? What am I wasting my time with?" Now that she's aware that she's being groomed for Sheriff, it's a whole different perspective because she knows that there's a next step coming. Nedley could probably sense that too, that she was kind of at the end of her rope, maybe when he recruited her he mentioned wanting to develop her or wanting to do things for the department and her being the catalyst for that. There were probably hints from him — and that's the only reason I can think that he got her there in the first place, that he was able to recruit her because she was top of her class and was so good at what she did. I imagine him kind of having to sell her and then she gets there and she's like "I'm not doing anything, what is this? Why was I brought here?" And what she probably thinks is it's Black Badge, but it's not. We see this renewed sense of her wanting to work again.



Photo Credit: SyFy

MM: She surely doesn't want to sit on the sidelines anymore. Obviously your character isn't playing games this season. The viewers knew that Waverly wasn't quite herself these days and immediately Nicole sensed something was off. Will there be more conflict that unfolds throughout the season when it comes to Gooverly?

KB: Yeah, definitely. Nicole keeps on that gut instinct and it's an interesting thing — what I really love about what the writers did is that there's this sense of — when you're in a new relationship, it's still so fresh and I think Nicole has this debate in her head of "is Waverly being weird or is she just trying to navigate our new relationship and getting cold feet. Maybe she's overwhelmed by it all." I think it's this kind of debate, she doesn't really know at first if Waverly's weirdness is because of her or if there's something going on and as she sees more she notices something is definitely very wrong.

MM: The fans went crazy over Nicole and Wynonna's interaction last season, will we get to see more of that friendship?

KB: Yeah, definitely. Nicole and Wynonna have some really fun stuff coming up later in the season.

MM: I can't wait. And the viewers were recently treated to WayHaught's very first love scene. How important was that and were you playing it like she was 100% Waverly or like maybe this other bad thing is still influencing her?

KB: For me, from Nicole's perspective, in that moment, she was playing it as 100% Waverly. In that moment, there was not a sense of "this might not be the real Waverly" but it's definitely still a possibility that Waverly wasn't 100% present and it will come up as something they talk about.

MM: In episode two, Waverly nommed on that giant spider thing. What would be the grossest thing that you'd ever eat. Let's pretend we're running our own *Wynonna Earp Fear Factor* episode?

KB: Any combination of goo and hair is really gross, to me. That would be the ultimate combination. Or anything chewy that I couldn't get down quickly, that I had to mangle over a while would be pretty gross.

MM: The texture of hair just throws you off. Now, there's a lot of dynamic characters on the show, a few new ones popping up. Which character would you be interested in trading places with?

KB: As an actor to play a different character? I think we have a lot of interesting things coming up with the Widow Sisters, and I think I would really love to play them. Where their storyline goes is really fun and interesting. I think that would be an amazing challenge as an actor.

MM: That'd be so cool to see. It must be fun as an actor to see all these dynamic things on screen and think "oh what if I played that person."

KB: Totally, absolutely. It's fun to play these duplicitous kind of villains and obviously these widow characters don't have the best intentions at this point as the audience has seen so far. They have some fun places to go.

MM: I'm still convinced Nicole could have some evil inside her. When we were introduced to her I was like "she's too good to be true. We'll see what happens." Now, the viewers had some questions as well and they want to know if Bernie would ever make his television debut in an episode of Wynonna Earp?

KB: I don't think so. It'd be super fun if he did. He's not with me when I'm shooting. He stays with my partner in Los Angeles so he's not even in Calgary. Animals have to be so well trained to be on set and he is very well trained but it's a lot for them and I think it would be very overwhelming. It would be a lot of fun though, if we wrote it in.



Photo Credit: Syfy

MM: Waverly and Nicole get a dog. That'd be fun. People can write fanfiction, instead [laughs]. Last year you guys made history with that iconic bullet proof vest scene, that made the lives of many LGBT viewers worldwide. What has it been like to meet those fans and hear those stories and how has it impacted you?

KB: It's been a life changing experience for me. It's been a hugely rewarding experience as an actor to see your work affect someone in such a positive way and such a huge kind of way, to be so incredibly important. I think I've been so privileged to be a part of it and be on the receiving end of so many stories and hearing how much that moment and this character has really meant to people and been an inspiration and been an idol or an iconic character

in their minds. I feel incredibly lucky because I'm so aware that I could have gone by whole career and never experienced anything like this. I feel extremely fortunate to have even been a part of something remotely like this. I think the show has been so iconic in so many ways for women and seeing powerful women, and women as superheroes, women holding guns, women who own their sexuality, and the amazing representation for the queer community on this show and something so positive, it's broken a lot of boundaries. As someone who definitely identifies as a feminist, and who is creating female driven work is very important to me, the fact that I got to work on this show out of any show I could have been cast on, I've been really blessed. I'm very lucky.

MM: That's amazing. I saw that you guys went to Clexa Con so that must have been a whole other experience in itself.

KB: Clexa Con was amazing. It was so nice to have all those people gathered in one place and to have everybody who, for that weekend, everyone who loved the same things and the same stories and loved that same genre was in one room and sharing the energy and seeing the artists who came and sold their work off it was really fun. It was a positive, happy atmosphere the whole weekend. It was unlike anything I'd ever experienced before.

MM: I'm on a mission to get you guys to New York Comic Con. I know the gang was there last year and that was a lot of fun so hopefully there's more of that for you guys in the future in terms of the East Coast

KB: Definitely. And we're really looking forward to going to San Diego Comic Con at the end of July. It's going to be a blast. I can't wait. I'm really looking forward to it.

MM: Since we last spoke, I asked you to construct a donut based off your dog's personality. Let's switch it up to Officer Haught's personality, season one, season two whichever you think.

KB: I'm going to go with a dense donut that's very structured. There's not a lot of fluff. It's very strong and doesn't have a lot of room for fluffy nonsense. I think she's a dense — maybe old fashioned like maybe classic, chocolate glazed or something. I do think Nicole is very old fashioned. I think her values and her view on the world and loyalty and her moral compass are something we don't find as much in our modern society. That's what I love about Nicole. The way she is in the world has this feeling of being this classic mentality of loyalty and bravery and wanting to be steadfast and courageous, a lot of these values I kind of associate with an older mentality that Nicole really emulates.



MM: And you have some fun stuff recently. *My Ex-Ex* just came out on Amazon, iTunes, Google Play and all those other platforms. Can you tell us about working on that project and any differences from playing Mary to Nicole?

KB: So many differences. That was my first lead in a feature that I'd ever done. What was fun about that project was there was so much improv. We had a loose structure but a lot of it was up to us to improv around it which was a super fun challenge and lots of laughs all day. Mary is a very — she's not nearly as together as Nicole. She's this perpetual ball of anxiety and stress all the time. She doesn't know what she wants. She's stuck between Mr. Right on Paper and Mr. Right For Her, whereas Nicole knows exactly what she wants and it's a challenge of how she's going to negotiate getting it or not getting it, when it comes to Black Badge and how to be okay with that. I think Nicole is a person who gets what she wants in life. If she sets her mind to something, she achieves it. She strikes me as the kind of person who if she wants to make the sports team, she made it. Or if she wanted a certain grade, she worked hard and she got it. For Nicole, this may be one of the first times in her life where she worked hard and she deserves something but she's not allowed to have it. I think that's a really interesting shift to watch somebody go through and something I can really identify with because I definitely felt that coming into college out of high school. When I worked hard at something and I was able to achieve it and then you get to college and you're with the best of the best. You're no longer the top of your field at something you're with everyone who is the top of their field in something. So I think that's kind of the difference between the two of them. You have Mary who is totally lost and doesn't know what she wants and how to get it. And then you have Nicole who knows exactly what she wants and an exterior barrier keeping her from it.

MM: Do you see more of Mary in yourself or Nicole?

KB: I think when I was younger I saw more Mary but as I've gotten older and started to find my speed and settle into myself, I see more Nicole now. Hopefully.

MM: Just to conclude is there anything else you want to say to the dedicated fans of *Wynonna Earp*?

KB: I think what I'd really like is to remind the fans to keep watching the show on the SyFy network. I can't stress how important it is for us that the fans watch the show on SyFy or DVR it because it's Friday night, not always ideal for other plans, but to just watch it before the end of the weekend. Because as much as the tweeting and all the social media and all that really does help us, the main thing that the network is looking for, because it is a business, is the number of people watching the show on the channel. It's good to watch it on their website. If anything, please, please don't watch it illegally. But if you can, go to SyFy's website and watch it. We need fans to watch it on SyFy because we need the network to know that people are enjoying it and need those numbers to be reflected in how many people watch it on the channel. That's my big PSA that I'm spreading right now.

MM: It's a very important one. Because obviously the viewership is important, although we'd like to think the social media is a big part, but we do want everybody to be watching it legally and on SyFy so SyFy sees that you guys are worth having on for many more seasons. I'll definitely make that a big bold statement in the piece and let everyone know. We need to see more. Emily Andras is one of my favorite people in the world and I need to see more of her stories on screen. So I'm sure everybody else feels that way.

KB: Me too. This show is just getting warmed up and I want to keep seeing it grow. So it's good to really encourage everyone to watch it on the network.

MM: We've got you covered!

KB: Thank you.

Wynonna Earp airs Friday's at 10/9c on SyFy
