

A woman of many talents, voice artist Karen Strassman gets candid on her storytelling and video games

Karen Strassman is a woman of many talents and is a successful actress, voice-over artist, and a dialect coach. Ever since she was a young child, she had a passion for acting and as she put it, "I'd love, I love pretending to be somebody else or imagining what it must be like to be somebody else".

"I think it was nature as opposed to nurture ever since I can remember," Strassman added as she shared she always had a passion for storytelling and art. At the young age of 14 she had the opportunity to play the role of Helen Keller in a school play and recalled how she would blindfold herself in order to understand the character and role more. "I just dove into what it must be like to be a little girl, who can't see or hear," she explained.

When she was older, she went to France to study psychology after believing she did not have the confidence to take up acting as a profession but she continued to take theater classes. She saw a notice in the theater studio one day looking for an American actor for an apprenticeship to become a dialect coach to be able to help French actors act in English. Strassman became very good at that and from there began to branch out into many new projects.

"It was so natural to me that they offered me a full-time job the following year," Strassman shared before adding that she also had the chance to lend her voice to many children's cassette books. She was then introduced to other voice over projects and eventually began work dubbing French films into English. "my whole career actually strangely started in France," Strassman

said.

Strassman recently had a recurring guest role on 'Preacher' and has brought her talent to many other shows including 'Silicon Valley', 'Weeds', 'Criminal Minds', and 'Private Practice'. She also played the lead role in the award-winning film 'Red Thunder' directed by Alvaro Ron.

"I don't want to give it away- it's a story about an unlikely superhero and I play a mom who is a paediatrist. My daughter is a teenager who wants to borrow my car and my car is a very special car and they have some adventures while they're in my car. And they discovered that I have a different identity than they thought. The special effects are fantastic and it's uplifting and heartwarming. And the cinematography is gorgeous!" Strassman added.



Photographer: Birdie Thompson @birds_eye_photo, **Hair and Makeup:** Allison Noelle @allisonnoellemakeup, **Clothing:** Pinup Girl @pinupgirlclothing

In addition to being an actress, Strassman has lent her voice to many massive and well-known video games such as 'Call of Duty: WWII', 'Halo Wars 2', 'Call of Duty: Black Ops III', and most recently 'World of Warcraft: Battle for Azeroth'.

Strassman explained the biggest difference between being on screen and voicing for a game is "that you have to express and convey everything by your voice only. On camera, there's a lot that you can convey through your eyes and through body language but as a voice actor you can't rely on any of those things and really need to feel, hear and experience the character".

"I have to dive into my imaginary reality and put myself there and then allow my voice to be sort of the conductor or the link between the audience and the experience," she continued. The other main difference between voice acting and being on screen is that you can play off other actors in acting but "in voiceover, you are on your own in a studio with the director and the engineer and the clients on the other side of the booth who are listening to you and giving you direction".

When it comes to auditioning for video games and voice acting, the directors and clients will "show you a little clip of the character. There are times when they don't have that and they can only show you a picture and sometimes they don't even have a picture and they'll just describe the character." The actor must take direction to create the voice. With some back and forth and tweaks, the directors and voice actors together give the character their unique voice.

"The director and the clients will listen and give you direction as to how they feel the character should be and what they like, what they don't like. And finally, settle on what works really well and what they like for the character,"

she added. Strassman explained how the characters for video games start off as lines on a page and as you read it, you are told the situation the character is in and must adapt the voice to suit that.

When it comes to adapting from character to character, Strassman shared "I physically transform into the character". While at a video game voice gig, Strassman shared, "I was doing a video game last week and they said 'oh, we wish we had a camera to tape you because what you're doing - you look like the character. And I said that 'I was very glad that they did not have a camera'. I don't know what I look like, but it must be very, very embarrassing sometimes," she said jokingly.

"It's more about powerful storytelling. For me when there is a story that is well told, it touches your people's souls and make feel things, and makes them open up their own heart and experience parts of humanity, and makes them think about the world or their life or helps them to understand other people more deeply. It's just so fulfilling to me to be part of any of those stories," Strassman added.