



# Exclusive: Kristin Lehman Talks *Ghost Wars*, Directing, & More

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Syfy's new series *Ghost Wars* takes place in the remote Alaskan town of Port Moore, where after an earthquake, ghosts have started appearing and creating chaos, threatening to destroy everyone in the town.

Kristin Lehman plays the part of Marilyn, the town doctor and wife to the mayor of the town, Val (Luvia Petersen).

Lehman recently talked to SciFi Vision in an exclusive interview about her work on the show.



***SCIFI VISION: How did you first become involved with the show?***

***KRISTIN LEHMAN:*** I had the tremendous good fortune of Simon Barry reaching out to me and asking if I would be interested in directing a block. My mouth just fell open at the good fortune of being offered a project to direct, because so rarely does that get offered to new directors, especially new female directors, so I was absolutely thrilled.

But also, my dear friend, Dennis Heaton, is the EP and head writer on the show, and he and I had done four years of another show together, so I jumped at the chance to work with pals in the sunny sunshine over a summer here in Vancouver.

And once Simon brought me forward to the networks to see if I would be okay to direct, they said, “Well, we know her as an actress; we’d love to okay her as a director. Would she consider acting in the show?” I agreed. So, I got the best of both worlds.

***Was there anywhere other than the script that you got inspiration for your character from while creating her?***

You know, I’m a mother in real life, so that wasn’t a hard stretch for me. And I also really loved the idea of being in a same sex relationship where nobody had to point [laughs], you know, fluorescent arrows to draw attention to it. I loved the normalcy of the world.

I know how to be a loving partner, and I know how to be a strong woman. So, it was just a pleasure to get to act alongside Luvia Petersen in our pretend family. There wasn’t really anything that I needed to look for outside the page; it was great.

***That leads me to my next question. Can you talk about working with Luvia?***

Oh, it was lovely. She’s just such a generous and effervescent actress who’s full of energy and always wanting to do the best work. It was just a lovely symbiosis. We had worked together briefly on another show, so, it was like a family coming together, which was really great.

***Will we get to see more backstory of their relationship?***

You know, I think really the dynamics that you see each episode are the ones that are very present day. So, we don’t really ever go into backstory, not with Marilyn and Val.

***I know you directed last week’s episode, 1.04, and you have another coming up. Can you talk about that aspect of working on the show?***

It’s just so wonderful that I really got a chance to do the beginning of the show and the end of the show, because we block shot this show. So, I shot 1.04, which just aired last week, and that’s still early in the show, where we’re still learning about the world we’re

in and the people that it's affecting, and therefore, to me, it's much more in the nest, as it were. It's very intimate and still really in the hands of the characters themselves.



And soon, as the series progresses, you'll see that the stress of this extraordinary experience begins to spiral and gain momentum in a way that was quite sprawling.

So, I got the pleasure of directing a show that was really in the hands of the actors as it were about relationships in the beginning, in a smaller, more contained way.

And then I had the pleasure of directing 1.08, where we're further into the season, and there's much more momentum and additional new frightening aspects to what Port Moore is experiencing.

So, it was really great to get both things. I really valued that.

***Do you have a favorite scene that either you directed or you filmed? Or maybe both?***

I have a favorite scene that I filmed that's coming up in 1.07. It was directed by Mathias Herndl, who is just an extraordinary and wonderful director. He's a jack of all trades and is currently the DP on the National Geographic show called *Genius*, but he was DP on this show I did called *Motive* for four years, and he's just such a tremendously talented man and such a pleasure to be with. Anything I film with him I love, but I absolutely loved a scene coming up in episode 1.07 where Marilyn is really forced to reckon with what is happening in the town.

I got to work with an actress who was in her 80s, and it was just such a pleasure to be with an actor who was older...I just loved hearing about her life and how she came to acting later, and it's just lovely to work with people who are intergenerational on a set. I think it's just always a really truthful experience when you get to experience diversity on set, and that's what I loved.

Also I loved filming the exorcism with Vincent [D'Onofrio] and Sharon [Taylor] and Chance [Hurstfield] in 1.04. I really, really loved the exorcism scenes that I shot. They were very challenging and every one of those actors really held the space and created something that was really visually very evocative. I just loved 1.04; I thought that episode was great.

***Is there something coming up for your character that you can tease?***

Yeah, you know, I think it takes Marilyn a long time to really come to grips with what might be happening in the town, and soon she has no choice but to acknowledge it, because she is directly affected in ways that she cannot deny anymore. And that's coming very soon.

***Can you describe Marilyn in three words?***

Loving, loyal, and smart.

***You've done a good bit of science fiction. Do you enjoy that, and do you enjoy watching that genre?***

You know, I don't generally watch it. I certainly watch the shows that I'm a part of, because I want to be able to say with integrity that I'm behind the projects I'm a part of, definitely. But it's not my first choice. I do like horror and sci-fi if it has a cerebral bent to it, which I do think that *Ghost Wars* has.



And the other sci-fi that I've done, it's really a story by story thing for me. If I enjoy the stories, then I want to be involved.

But earlier in my career, the vast amount of sci-fi I did was because that's what was shooting where I was living, but if the story is good, yes I want to be a part of it, no matter what the genre.



***What kind of stuff then do you like to watch?***

I love documentaries. I loved *Ozark*. I loved *The Great British Bake-Off*. I watch a lot of *Top Gear* with my son, [laughs] because he loves it. I'm about to start *Mind Hunter*. I loved *Bloodline*, loved *Fleabag*. I don't know that I can put my finger on it to say what my common theme might be. Love, love, love *Peaky Blinders*. It's really about the nexus of evocative imagery and great story telling. I'm hooked if it's got that.

***One of your projects coming up seems like it would be science fiction, *Altered Carbon*. Is there anything you can tell me about it?***

I can't at all; I'm so sorry. I've got nondisclosures up the yin yang on that one. It's bold and vast, it's operatic, it's ambitious, and it's of a huge scale, and I loved doing it.

***Do you have any other projects coming up that you can talk about?***

You know, I just wrapped *Ghost Wars*, and I'm happily spending time with my family now. So, anything coming down the pipe is in the nest right now.

***This is unrelated, but one thing that I have to mention, is that I really loved *Strange World*. When I saw that Tim Guinee was in *Ghost Wars* and then you were going to be on it - it's too bad the two of you didn't have some scenes together.***

Well Tim and I, because of *Strange World*, we are close long time friends. That show gifted me with the magic of Tim Guinee, and I am 100% percent and everyday grateful, because we've had a twenty five year friendship that I just couldn't be more grateful for.

***Your other role that sticks out to me, not only because I'm a huge fan of the show, but also because you played such an iconic character (*Esther Nairn/Invisigoth*), is *The X-Files*. If you can think back [laughs] can you talk about working on that show?***

Wow, that show gave me everything. That show basically gave me a career in the states. It was wonderful doing that show; it was unbelievable.

That episode was their first episode back after they filmed the movie. The adjustment between making a movie and making a television show *[laughs]* they're not anything like each other, actually, which meant it ended up taking us two weeks to shoot that one episode, which is not the norm in television and had not been the norm in *The X-Files* either. But consequently, *[laughs]* I was paid very handsomely.

I just loved it. I was a young actress who had endless stamina, and so I could really bring everything to that role that I absolutely loved, but it was incredibly challenging, because we were filming it in the dead winter, and I was not wearing any sleeves. I was freezing for most of it, but it was really a chance for me to sink my teeth into something that had so much meat on it and had so much pedigree. I felt absolutely elated, and I am forever grateful both that I got the job, but also to that character, because she's, as you said - thank you - she is iconic. I really, I knock on wood, count my lucky stars everyday that I was on that show.