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Tuesday, December 6, 2011

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[Carrie Brownstein of *Portlandia* on TV Glamour and Putting Birds on It](#)

By [Melissa Locker](#) | [December 6, 2011](#)



Carrie Brownstein is very busy, what with touring with her band Wild Flag and starring in *Portlandia* alongside Fred Armisen (their [season-one DVD is out today](#), and would make a lovely gift). But despite the constricts of these (incredibly awesome) day jobs, she very generously found the time to spin some tunes and talk to us on [Turntable.fm](#). Among the topics covered: [Heavy Metal Parking Lot](#), George Michael, and whether she's planning to throw any furniture from buildings.

Melissa Locker started playing "With A Girl Like You" by The Troggs

Melissa Locker: Hi Carrie!

Carrie Brownstein: Hi.

ML: Thanks for coming to play music! Everyone at *The Hairpin* is very excited.

CB: Me too.

Carrie Brownstein started playing "I Want To See The Bright Lights Tonight" by Richard & Linda Thompson

ML: I always like Richard and Linda Thompson because they seem so equitable.

CB: Ha, yes equitable. I love the interplay between their voices and Richard's guitar lines. His leads are great. The horns in this song are great.

ML: Yeah, like Mariachi Lite.

CB: Also, she says "a couple drunken knights rolling on the floor." You'd think it would be "nights" but no! That's not medieval enough.

ML: Medieval Times, Behind the Music?

CB: Yep. [the lyric plays] There it is.

ML: Haha.

CB: Yep.

ML: Do you tend to listen to music with female leads? Do you seek it out?

CB: Actually not really. But I don't really differentiate music in that way.

Melissa Locker started playing "Golden Lights" by Twinkle

ML: Do you think people put your band(s) in the "female" music category?

CB: Ah, I mostly know this as a Smiths song.

ML: I know! They covered her.

CB: Yes, people probably put my bands in that category. But it's not an accurate descriptor. I find it a little lazy. I mean, does something sound "female" or "male?" It's music.

ML: It always bugs me when people try to say Sleater Kinney and now Wild Flag are "chick rock." It's just rock.

CB: I always loved when people started saying we sounded like Zeppelin or Wire.

ML: Yeah! Wire is actually pretty appropriate. How do you have time to be in both a successful touring band and on a successful TV show? Is that how the modern lady has it all?

CB: Do I have time? My friends would say I don't.



Carrie Brownstein started playing "I Will Dare" by The Replacements

ML: Haha my next song is The Replacements too.

CB: Really? Which one?

ML: It will be a surprise! Have you seen the Replacements fan documentary, "[Color Me Obsessed](#)"?

CB: I haven't. Is it good?

ML: It is! All fans, no Replacements.

CB: All fans huh? That can be interesting. But also good. I mean, I don't really want to know too much about The Replacements. They're so mysterious. Last night I watched both the [Nilsson doc](#) and also the one about [Scott Walker](#). The latter was really weird.

ML: I didn't know there was a Nilsson doc or a Scott Walker documentary. Why was it weird?

CB: I guess Scott Walker is weird, so a film about him is weird too.

ML: Yes, like I wouldn't watch a GG Allin documentary.

CB: The weirdest thing was that they filmed famous people listening to his records. I found it annoying.

ML: Oh like in [the Clash documentary](#). Where they have Anthony Keidis telling you to like The Clash.

CB: Yes. That doesn't validate anything.

ML: Or Johnny Depp dressed as a pirate talking about The Clash?

CB: It's almost distracting. That Johnny Depp thing was ridiculous.

Melissa Locker started playing "Portland" by The Replacements

ML: It was. Like he couldn't take off the pirate outfit?

CB: Ah, yes. Portland. They apologize to Portland on one album. They were so drunk they couldn't finish a show.

ML: Yeah and apparently he and Scott McCaughey [of Young Fresh Fellows] threw a couch out the window or off the balcony at Pine Street. Don't try that at home kids.

CB: Jeez. Of course they did! There aren't enough couches tossed from windows these days.

ML: There really aren't. Kids these days. No trashing hotel rooms. No couch tossing. Wild Flag ever try that?

CB: Not yet. But I've been going to the gym a lot. The trick is making it look effortless. And unplanned. It's a delicate balance.

ML: That's true. You don't want to do it halfway.

CB: Nope. It's all or nothing.

ML: Those high kicks you do look pretty energetic, though.

CB: Those high kicks are fun, yes.

ML: Do you stretch first? Or just go for it?

CB: I stretch. Sort of. Maybe Fred and I can do this at the [Portlandia live gigs](#).

ML: You should! Do you know what you're doing on tour yet?

CB: Sort of. Yes. Mostly.

Carrie Brownstein started playing "(My Heart Is) Closed For The Season" by Bettye Swann

ML: Were you surprised by how quickly the tour sold out? It was literally just a few minutes.

CB: Yes. That was unreal. We're not a tested live act or anything. It was very flattering. And it will only make us work harder. We feel very grateful.

ML: People just really like you guys! I do not know Bettye Swann.

CB: She was never popular. But they've reissued her early stuff. It's all very forlorn. And delicate. I like the idea of a heart being closed for a season.

ML: Right. No ice cream, no love. We're closed.

CB: Exactly. Seasonal affection. Like a swimsuit season. A resort town.

Melissa Locker started playing "Sleep Talk" by Shannon and The Clams

ML: Did you always want to be on TV or did it just evolve out of your friendship with Fred?

CB: I guess as a kid I did want to be on TV. I took acting classes and was in plays a school. But then I discovered punk music in high school and that took over. It was so much more immediate. And forming a band was something you could do in an instant.

ML: You were in Redmond, WA, right? It was probably easier to be in a band than land acting opportunities there.

CB: Yes, Redmond. It's a suburb of Seattle. Now known as Microsoft headquarters. Yes, much easier than acting, or trying to break into that. Plus, I felt like an ugly awkward teenager and I thought of TV and movie people as glamorous.

ML: I just had a mental image of that little [Paperclip helper guy](#) teaching your classes. Now you get to be the glamorous woman on TV.

CB: Not glamorous. But on TV. *Portlandia* is not heavy on the glamour.

ML: Candice and Toni may disagree!

CB: Candice for sure. This band is from the Bay Area right?

ML: I think.

CB: It's very retro. Could be from a Nuggets comp.

ML: Yeah, that's why I like the song.

Carrie Brownstein started playing "Exciter" by Judas Priest

ML: Judas Priest! Sorry. Had a *Heavy Metal Parking Lot* moment.

CB: Yes. I really love metal. What a great movie!

ML: I know. It should be required viewing for ... everyone, I guess.

CB: "I'd jump his bones" is my favorite quote from it. But there are so many amazing moments.

ML: It's so funny to watch now that Rob Halford is out.

CB: I know. It reminds me of when my friends and I saw George Michael in concert. We had no idea, but it seems so obvious now.

ML: Hahaha! I had a huge crush on him and my brother was like, "You're an idiot."

CB: That's what is so great about music. Identity and sexuality can be so fluid and transformative. It all goes into one big pile.

ML: I saw him at the Tacoma Dome in 1989?

CB: Me too! Same concert!!

ML: No way!

CB: The Faith tour.

ML: Totally! I may still have my t-shirt.

CB: I have my ticket stub. You grew up in Seattle?

ML: We drove up from Portland with my friend's dad.

CB: Oh, Portland.

ML: There was no big venue when I was a kid. It was the Tacoma Dome or nothing.

CB: Nope. Not here in Portland. Even in Seattle, you have to go do the Tacoma Dome. Still. Like that Kanye/Jay-Z *Thrones* project is playing the Tacome Dome. It's still the place.

ML: Oh yeah, I have friends roadtripping to that.

CB: My bandmate Rebecca might be roadtripping to that, too.

ML: I hear it's amazing show.

CB: Yes, I bet it is. I want to see Drake.

ML: But how could it not be? And yeah Drake!

Melissa Locker started playing "Superball" by Helium

ML: As someone who has lived in Portland for a long time, do you worry that your show encourages people to move there?

CB: Not really.

ML: Even when I was a kid people in Portland were so, "Don't move here."

CB: I think that attitude is very pervasive in the whole Pacific Northwest. People know how special it is. We still

want to be thought of as explorers.

Carrie Brownstein started playing "I Want To See The Bright Lights Tonight" by Richard & Linda Thompson

CB: Again! Where was Helium?

ML: It didn't load. Technical difficulties.

Melissa Locker started playing "Feel It All Around" by Washed Out

CB: Theme song.

ML: Yes. This song may sound familiar.

CB: Yep.

ML: How did you pick it as the *Portlandia* theme song?

CB: It was a placeholder, and then we couldn't imagine the intro without it.

ML: It is very evocative.

CB: I just read that that's what happened with "Everybody's Talkin'" in *Midnight Cowboy*.

ML: Really?

CB: They went out to Dylan and Joni Mitchell. But they got used to that song and they could never find one that fit better.

ML: And then Nilsson reigned supreme.

CB: Dylan submitted "Lay Lady Lay."

ML: I would choose Nilsson over Joni Mitchell most days.

CB: Me too. Joni Mitchell has too much personality. Which isn't a bad thing.

ML: Haha.

CB: But it makes her songs their own world. They don't augment someone else's art very well.

ML: True. I don't picture myself in "Blue." You have so many musicians in season two of *Portlandia*. Were there any that you got really starstruck by?

Carrie Brownstein started playing "Nothing Ever Happened" by Deerhunter

CB: It's unfair because I'd met all of them before. But certainly I respect them so much that I'm still a little in

awe. Actually, I'd never met Steve Jones!

ML: From the Sex Pistols.

CB: And I was a little nervous around him.

ML: That would make me unfortunately giggly.

CB: I'm not jaded at all though, so I felt very grateful to get to work with these people in a different context.

ML: Who else would you love to have on the show?

CB: So many people. From Cate Blanchett to Werner Herzog. Just anyone whose sensibility we feel might match ours.

ML: Werner Herzog would be amazing.

CB: Yes! Season 3!!

ML: Season 3!

You can (and should!) follow Carrie Brownstein on Twitter @Carrie_Rachel, and Portlandia returns to IFC on January 6. The first season is out today on DVD. Buy it [here!](#) You can follow Melissa Locker on Twitter @woolyknickers.

Photo via [Public Radio](#)

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[annepersand](#)

I *literally* squealed and flailed when I saw this interview. Carrie Brownstein is the marchioness of my {<3}.

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 4:20 pm](#)

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[Decca](#)

Och, "(My Heart Is) Closed For The Season" is so gorgeous. The only reason I know it is because of an old episode of All Song's Considered about best break-up songs and Carrie chose it. So delicate and sad.

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 4:20 pm](#)

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[Decca](#)

Also, and I understand the point, but the quasi-bashing of Joni Mitchell pains me!

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 4:30 pm](#)

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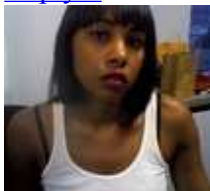


[Polina](#)

And the Mats appear again on the 'pin! And Carrie Brownstein I love you! Yes!

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 4:34 pm](#)


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[Charlie](#)

FUCK YEAH Carrie Brownstein. She lives in my brain and plays all the music I LOVE. So money. Also, [TEAM HARRY NILSSON](#).

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 4:35 pm](#)

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[Tuna Surprise](#)

What do we need to do to get an episode with Herzog making a doc about Aimee Mann?

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 4:44 pm](#)

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[Lucienne](#)

@Tuna Surprise Point out her similarities to Kinski. OR tell him she is the last speaker of a language.

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 6:10 pm](#)

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[remargaret](#)

Holy shit! Hadn't made the connection between "the really cool-sounding woman on NPR who likes harder music than bob boilen, my voice-crush" and... anything, really. Wild Flag! I envisioned her with red hair.

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 5:00 pm](#)

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[Katie Walsh](#)

Ok, but Carrie Brownstein, I desperately need to know what shade of red lipstick you wear. It's been driving me bananas since I saw that making of Portlandia episode thingy going around online. You are wearing the best shade of reddish brown shimmery daytime red lipstick and I liked it so much I wrote "Carrie Brownstein red lipstick" on my CVS shopping list. I was unsuccessful and yet I still try to recreate it. I think you might be wearing it in this picture. I need to know! BADLY!

Cacao.

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 5:51 pm](#)


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[aliceandstuff](#)

@Katie Walsh In the unlikely event I get to meet her at the Portlandia tour I will make sure I ask this instead of freaking out like usual.

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 6:18 pm](#)

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[chelsaurus](#)

@Katie Walsh Post or link a photo of the lipstick you want to identify to this board and they'll help you out. They've helped me in the past, especially when I freaked over the lipstick in the True Blood opening sequence:

[Makeup Alley](#)

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 6:40 pm](#)

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[LastMinuteLulu](#)

@Katie Walsh That really is the perfect shade of red lipstick. Now I wanna know too!

Posted on [December 7, 2011 at 1:44 pm](#)

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[smidge](#)

@Katie Walsh Katie!! Did you ever find out what shade of lipstick this is??

Posted on [December 14, 2011 at 5:55 pm](#)

[Reply »](#)  0



[josiah](#)

Wild Flag is the most important thing in my life right now; 'Romance' is my new anthem.

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 6:17 pm](#)

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[aliceandstuff](#)

@josiah I love the front half of that album but it runs out of steam for me. I think maybe it is because I had to miss them when they played live here.

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 6:18 pm](#)

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[josiah](#)

@aliceandstuff

I cannot agree! 'Racehorse' is the 3rd sexiest song I know! (I have seen them two times, so maybe that makes the difference.)

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 6:25 pm](#)

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Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 6:58 pm](#)

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[Four Horsemeals of the Eggporkalypse](#)

@E I know! I feel the same way! And, like, I like listening to music and all, but...I can't talk about it? Like, I can say "I like it" or "I don't like it" but beyond that? WHAT DO YOU SAY ABOUT MUSIC?? It's not about words for me. :'(

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 7:32 pm](#)

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[tortietabbie](#)

@E I feel this way too. And whenever someone asks me what I like or what I'm listening to, I mentally scramble for a minute to think up some band that I think is hip and appropriately obscure because I feel like such a loser saying, "uh...Adele...again..."

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 8:50 pm](#)

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[Nutmeg](#)

@Four Horsemeals of the Eggporkalypse I slept with a dude for 2 weeks until I got tired of him having to mansplain music to me all the time. I would say something like, "Yeah, I just don't like The Beach Boys," and he would get all mad, "HOW CAN YOU NOT LIKE THEM PET SOUNDS IS THE MOST TRANSCENDENT BLAH BLAH BLAH," and I would be all, "Dude, I don't like them, I don't care if I should for 'Musical Reasons'."

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 9:08 pm](#)

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[queenieliz](#)

@Nutmeg ugh. I "dated" a drummer once. It never would have worked long term because I hate the Beach Boys. No amount of mansplaining is going to change that!

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 9:22 pm](#)

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[Kitten Mittens](#)

Great interview, but not enough discussion of putting a bird on it. I screech that to my friend M probably twice a week.

P.S. M and I are both inordinately invested in seeing Fred Armisen settle down with a nice girl, post-Peggy. Look how cute in his little toque!

Posted on [December 6, 2011 at 11:31 pm](#)

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[chickaboom](#)

@Kitten Mittens Except, scientology.

Posted on [December 7, 2011 at 9:10 am](#)

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[BoozinSusan](#)

@chickaboom Srsly? Armisen? Scientology? I can't.

Posted on [December 7, 2011 at 9:18 am](#)

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[Kitten Mittens](#)

@chickaboom I thought the rumors were that he WASN'T a Scientologist, and that's actually why he and Elisabeth Moss broke up - that she's all into it. Although, if he married someone who's really into Scientology in the first place, I guess that does reflect on his acceptance of it?

(The fact that Erika Christensen is a Scientologist just breaks my heart every time I catch "Parenthood." I'm irrationally convinced she and I would be real-life BFFs, and drink wine & talk about how dreamy Sam Jaeger is.)

Posted on [December 7, 2011 at 12:23 pm](#)

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[josiah](#)

@Kitten Mittens

What if there was no Google? Then I would never have to live with the disappointment of not being the first person to have thought, "Yeah, well, if you like it then you should have put a bird on it." :(

Posted on [December 7, 2011 at 2:40 pm](#)

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[Kitten Mittens](#)

@josiah Ahahaha! I know **exactly** the feeling you describe. (And I also know that video - Atticus and Clementiiiiine!)

P.S. I am cringingly aware that maybe Carrie (and maybe even Fred! yikes!) checked the comments on this post, and I feel even weirder now about speculating about Fred's love life/religion. (And we are all apparently on a first-name basis now, so, YEAH.) It's all done out of love, I promise! LOOK HOW CUTE IN HIS LITTLE TOQUE!

Posted on [December 7, 2011 at 11:29 pm](#)

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[LastMinuteLulu](#)

TURNTABLE INTERVIEW WITH CARRIE BROWNSTEIN?! I have officially died and gone to heaven. <3

Posted on [December 7, 2011 at 1:38 pm](#)

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Posted on [December 8, 2011 at 2:05 pm](#)



[SimplyVinyl](#)

Richard and Linda Thompson - I Want To See The Bright Lights Tonight album is now available on Vinyl at www.Simplyvinyl.com

Posted on [December 8, 2011 at 2:06 pm](#)

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[Erin Thompson](#)

Fuck that Paperclip Helper guy! I loathe his existence. He is so bossy. Always trying to elbow his way in and hyperlink and auto-whatsit everything. I<3 Carrie Brownstein though!

Posted on [December 8, 2011 at 6:35 pm](#)

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[kendra j. @twitter](#)

Dear Carrie Brownstein,

I've had a crush on you since 7th grade (I'm in my mid-20s now). It's good to see you're just as awkward online as I am.

Posted on [December 10, 2011 at 12:03 am](#)

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