

Media From The Heart

By Ruth Hill

My Devotional Thoughts

Interview With Actor Nicole Oliver, “Good Morning Christmas!”



Hallmark and *My Little Pony* introduced me to the astounding Nicole Oliver several years ago, and I am forever grateful for that fact. My daughter is still an enormous fan of hers though *My Little Pony* is not the “big deal” it once was. Nicole is one of those people who can simply do it all, and she makes it seem remarkably effortless in the process! Moreover, she accomplishes it all with grace and panache, and a bit of humor on the side. I cannot believe this is my sixth interview with her!! In honor of her recent premiere on the Hallmark Channel—*Good Morning Christmas!*—I am beyond ecstatic to share our recent chat.

RH: Nicole, it's so good to chat with you today.

NO: Same here, Ruth. How are you doing?

We are all good here. And you?

Oh, we're all good too. We have a new little cat named Leonard. He's just over twelve weeks old. He's a little white Himalayan cat with blue eyes.

How sweet! I love cats anyway.

He's a sweetie. His full name is "Leonard Di Catrio."

Oh, that's so cute!

The boys named him Leonard. He's definitely a Leonard.



It's great that you got a cat, especially during this crazy time that doesn't seem to be going away any time soon.

How true. How's Martha and your family?

You know, we are doing really well. Martha is in her senior year of high school. The only downside is that she is at home. It's all remote learning here, and it doesn't look like that's changing any time soon. But she's a straight-A student. But at her school, around sixty percent of the students are failing, which is pretty sad.

Oh, that's tough. Our kids are doing what they call a quadmaster system. So instead of all eight courses all year long, they're doing two in twelve weeks. And then they'll do the next two in the next twelve weeks. It seems reasonable until you realize this may continue till next year, which could mean there's a year between math for some kids. Also, it's a really fast pace of learning for the kids, very intense. And some kids are taking courses out of order, which makes it very challenging. But I know everyone's just trying their best with the situation. We've got tutors to help with our boys and their math, and thank heavens for that.

I know it's difficult all over, and I feel for the kids. And when I hear about so many going through such challenging times, I know I have nothing to complain about because Martha's doing well, and she's already applied and been accepted to her college of choice.

That's fantastic! Congratulations to her!

Thanks. And I live with my parents, so I don't have the issue of being separated from my family during this time. So I am counting my blessings.

That's such fantastic news, Ruth.

I'm glad things are doing fairly well in Vancouver, for the most part.

Yes, our numbers have gone up, but most of that is in just certain areas. Vancouver has had to close some things down, especially in places where there have been cultural gatherings of families, multi-generational families living together in houses. They have tied a lot of the outbreaks back to Halloween weekend and even before that with some weddings and stuff that had one hundred people in a house, which is illegal. You're not supposed to do that, but people did it anyway. The contract tracers are overwhelmed, and while it doesn't seem like everything's gonna be shut down, they are doing what the rest of our country is doing. In the areas that have problems, that area will get extra restrictions. I am not foreseeing another complete lockdown unless the hospitals become overwhelmed, and the situation becomes dire. At least, that's the story I'm going to keep telling myself.

I am with you there, Nicole. I got to see you are in a new Hallmark Christmas movie this week.





Oh, yeah, it's been busy for me. I feel very blessed. That's the word I'm gonna use right now. When everything shut down in March...you know, I've always been very diversified. I do lots of different things in the entertainment field, and this is why I'm so grateful to have the voiceover work in my back pocket. That work continued. I'm directing two animated series from home, which is a bit different. One is for Dreamworks. It's a new cartoon series for them, and that's all I can say. But it's amazing. My cast is all over Toronto and Vancouver. I'm also directing the second season of *Molly of Denali* for PBS.

And we got nominated for a Peabody Award and won for that series. In fact, that series won a bunch of awards. It's such a beautiful show. I'm so proud to be a part of it. We just started recording our second season, so that's going on. It's a beautiful thing to have happen in this huge time of uncertainty for so many artists. It's important to have this little bit of steady. A wee bit of steady helps keep me steady. There's my T-shirt slogan. A little bit of steady helps me be a little more adventurous in other areas.

So the acting completely shut down up here in March and then got going in again in July and August. I had just done two great projects, one of which is this Hallmark movie. I got reunited with [Alison Sweeney](#) on that. And Mark Blucas. It was awesome, but it was mildly terrifying because of COVID. But everyone did everything they could to pivot quickly and do our jobs with our masks on. It takes so many people to make one of these beautiful projects. We kind of all get together and smush and become this organism to get it done, but you can't do that the same way anymore. You have to find a way to work together while being apart. So that was challenging, but I think we did it. I had a blast on the project. I've always loved Hallmark movies, and I'm a Christmas nut anyway. I like the idea of family and togetherness and love and hope, all these great things that are needed more so now than ever. It's fun, and I can hardly wait for everybody to see it. I was really thrilled with it.

Oh, I was excited to see it, and it was lovely. Hallmark is knocking it out of the park this year with forty new movies. I don't know how on earth they are doing it, but it is phenomenal.

Yes, Ruth, things are moving so fast here.

I remember you worked with Ali on...

Love On the Air.

Oh, yeah, I couldn't remember the name.

So this one is called *Good Morning Christmas*. I play Ali's producer, and she's one half of the top morning co-host team, but, of course, behind the scenes, she and her co-host may not be as chummy and lovely and friendly as they appear in the front of the camera. Every year we have a contest where a town writes in, and we pick the most "Christmasy" town, and we go there and film a day there. But this year, we decide to do a week because there's other things transpiring behind the scenes. And being in Mistletoe, Maine, and the magic of the season...Hallmark put two bickering talk show hosts in a town called Mistletoe, and I'm probably not giving anything away to say that maybe love might find a way.

I think it just might! This is Hallmark, so we're kind of thinking it might!

It was great fun to film. I was so excited to be around Christmas trees and Christmas decorations. They were everywhere you looked; there was so much Christmas stuff. And I was just happy. I was like, "I'm putting my tree up now!" Okay, so maybe I waited a little bit longer, but I wanted to put my tree up right away because it just made me so happy.

When did you guys film this?



In September into October. And it premiered on Thanksgiving Eve in the States, the same time it premiered up here on the W Network.

Well, I know the female fans love Mark Blucas. He has quite a following amongst the Hallmark community, the females especially because they think he's so handsome.

He's all right if you like that kind of thing. He's good-looking, but he's also super smart. He's really passionate about what he does, and he wants to bring his best to everything. He has a great collaborative presence on set—always quick to joke with the crew, especially when things are going sideways. Ali is the same way. She's a true number one and very welcoming and friendly. So you have these two together, and they're just a powerhouse. And the script and everything was wonderful, but when those two got together and got their hands on it all, it became something else, and I'm really excited to see it all put together. I think the fans are gonna love it.



Obviously! I have no doubt!

I saw some of it the other day when I went for ADR—where we have to fix the sound because maybe a plane flew by or a train or the mic fell or something—and it looks so good! There's skating. There's funny hats. There's hot cocoa. There's Christmas lights.

That's amazing! I understand you also just finished filming season two of *Narcoleap*.



Yes, right before making this movie. I filmed a lead in this show that's called a short-form series. It used to be called a web series, but now they call it a short-form series. It's science fiction, and it was so much fun. I got to do some stunts. I don't think I've done stunts in maybe a decade. I got to play with guns, smash a bottle, do a little fighting...it was so much fun. Very empowering. Great cast. Chelsey Reist, who in *The 100*. [Cameron Bancroft](#), who's done everything. Aleks Paunovic, who's done everything. I mean, he's on *Snowpiercer* right now. He was on *Van Helsing*. There are lots of twists and turns. The show has a female writer/producer.

Kate Green is awesome. And for the year we've had, everyone's kind of putting a finger up to 2020, as we say. But I'm also giving it a little bit of a nod. I think when challenging times come, sure, I put my head in the sand for a little bit and cry, but in general, I've been taught you got to look at the challenge and figure a way around it. So 2020 has certainly done that for me personally and professionally. I'm grateful I've been able to keep moving forward on the path I want to walk, even at these difficult times.

Speaking of *Narcoleap*, I loved season one. I know they kept talking about the possibility of season two, but when I saw they were actually filming it during this time, I was surprised and delighted.

It just kind of happened and worked out in our schedules so that we could make it work. Kate was a miracle worker. It was just over sixteen days that we filmed it. There's going to be lots of twists and turns. I love my character. That's all I can tell you. But I think y'all are going to love my character too. It was so fun going from that to Hallmark. Completely different ends of the spectrum.

Have they announced when season two will be available?



They haven't announced it officially. I'm sure they'll announce as soon as they can. I'm thinking it will most likely be a 2021 release because they want to make sure they do a good job on it. A lot of my scenes were with Chelsey, Aleks, and Cameron. Those two guys are actors I've known for a long time, so it was great to have that relationship going into this project, especially during these uncertain times, and to be playful when the environment wasn't necessarily that way. It was a real gift to be able to escape a little bit. And the same with Hallmark. What a gift to be able to escape and to provide escapism to others potentially.

One of the fun things I find about the business and wearing different hats is seeing your community in different ways, and seeing each other in auditions. But now everything is being done remotely, and we don't run into our friends after auditions like we used to. We don't get together and chat and talk shop, and that's really hard. I think that's part of the process of being a performer. That's been put on pause for now. But it's delightful to direct over zoom. I get to see my friends that way.



Zoom has become such a way of life, hasn't it?

Oh, it has. I mean, I wish I would have bought stock in Zoom. I wish we all would have bought stock if we could have.

So cool that you can direct over Zoom, Nicole.



Zoom has been great. Not all the producers are on set, but some of them are zooming in and watching video village. When I did my ADR for the Hallmark movie, the director was zooming in. There might have been other people in the control room who were zooming in too. Everyone's adapting. I'm going to be hopeful and say that all this adapting is going to reveal even more creativity. There's got to be a silver lining, and that's how I've got to look at it.

I am with you there completely. And speaking of silver linings, I want to thank you, Nicole, that you continue to focus on the positive stuff. That is something I have always appreciated about you. Thank you for not putting anyone down or being negative. I know everyone does social media a little differently, but I so appreciate positive people like you. Some people choose not to be as positive, and it sometimes makes me not want to even look at my social media feed. But I'm never concerned about what you post.

Thank you for saying that, Ruth. You know, I try to tell our kids that when we post something, we need to ask ourselves if this is something we want to stand by five hours from now. Is this who I want the world to think we are? I want to be known for being kind. Of course, there may come a time to be provocative, but if you can do it without putting people down...that's how I look at it. Without putting too fine a point on it, I think it's okay for us to be different. Thinking different can inspire and lead to a beautiful evolution of thoughts and ideas. It's okay if we disagree, but we don't need to be mean or put others down in the process just to make ourselves feel stronger. That's actually a real weak move. That's how I look at things, and that's how I try to move forward.