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ALEX KAPP HORNER
and TRICIA O'KELLEY
may be the Meanie Moms
on *The New Adventures
of Old Christine*. But over
lunch, these real-life
friends couldn't be
any nicer

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'MEAN'

BY JIM COLUCCI

Alex Kapp Horner and Tricia O'Kelley look as if they could actually be their TV characters, Meanie Moms Lindsay and Marly: They're perky, blond, and right at home in Beverly Hills. But as we found out over lunch at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel's restaurant, The BLVD, O'Kelley, who grew up in suburban Chicago, and native New Yorker Kapp Horner are not at all like the "Meanies" whose pointy shoes they fill on *The New Adventures of Old Christine*. Whereas Meanies Lindsay and Marly might amuse themselves by abusing a waiter or even each other, Alex and Tricia—such good friends they complete each other's sentences—are grateful, humble and above all, well ... just plain nice.

Jim Colucci: Are Lindsay and Marly really Meanie Moms?

Tricia O'Kelley: I don't think we're downright mean. I think it's more that we are very clique-y and spoiled. Lindsay and Marly have never wanted for anything, and so they just don't know any better.

Alex Kapp Horner: Right after the show premiered, I read something that described our characters as Statler and Waldorf, those two old men who sat in the balcony and judged everything on *The Muppet Show*. I think the reviewer was actually trying to be a little mean, but I was so flattered.

TO: Lately I've been thinking it has evolved into me being the Rizzo of the Pink Ladies in *Grease*, and Lindsay is the Frenchie, who does whatever Rizzo does.

JC: In order to play your characters as such a two-headed monster, you two have developed a chemistry and timing together. Did you know each other before the show?

AKH: No. Right before we shot the pilot, [Old *Christine* creator] Kari Lizer took us all out to Morton's steakhouse, where we did a table read of the script in a private room. And it was the most bizarre, instant thing from the moment Tricia and I sat down next to each other.

JC: How are you different?

TO: Our acting styles are different. Alex's tone and delivery is very specific.

AKH: And so is hers. I remember we were at the table read of the pilot and Tricia had a line where the very first time she said it, the way she said it, it was so perfect. It was when Christine says that her husband is dating another woman named Christine, and Marly says, "Oh, I would die." I remember thinking, "I would never have thought to do that!"

TO: Now that we're friends, Alex and I are very similar.

AKH: We're unbelievably best friends. She just asked me this morning, "Have you ever said anything bad about me?" And I haven't. I've never said anything. I adore her.

JC: Do you think this new real-life friendship is starting to show on-screen?

TO: I hope so. We actually have a little



Julia Louis-Dreyfus with O'Kelley and Kapp Horner.

back story in mind for both of them that they've been friends for a long time—we think they went to high school together.

JC: How did you each get cast on the show?

TO: Actually, I can't believe it now, but I almost didn't go to the audition. I was doing an independent film at the time, and I felt I didn't have time for any guest-star roles. So the first time I got a call about the show, I said no. Then a few weeks later, they called again and asked if I could come in at 9 a.m. the next day. I stayed out late at the film's wrap party that night, and so that next morning, I woke up at about 8, really tired. But then I realized—this is a pilot for Julia Louis-Dreyfus! So I got it together, and I had to race over to Warner Bros. to get there on time. About two days later they called and said I had the job.

AKH: I knew Kari, and I'd heard that she had written a really good pilot. I was in a real slump at the time, and I just felt I needed a job to break the slump. I felt like the Red Sox. So I got a copy of the script, and instantly realized, "Wow, a 35-year-old woman struggling with being a mother? That's totally relevant to my life."

JC: Lindsay and Marly may be regular characters now, but you're not on every week. How have you managed to make such an impression?

AKH: I think part of the reason is because we come in, say a bunch of really cutting things, and then we're gone. The stuff they're writing for us to do is so good, we make a big splash. We're there for a very specific purpose and then we're out.

TO: Plus, everybody else is really kind of based in reality, so we stand out because we're the caricatures. But what I like is, as the show has gone on, we've gotten these little glimpses into their private lives—and they're just a mess. Which is probably the reason they make other people feel bad about themselves. We're finding out that Lindsay doesn't know how to parent, and I don't have a good marriage at all.

JC: Is that why you're such playground bullies with Christine?

AKH: I think so. The bullies are always the people who have trouble at home or who feel insecure.

TO: We're still on the playground, wondering, "Who are we going to be mad at today?" It makes us feel better about ourselves. I like to believe that we're a little envious of Christine. She's got it all together.

AKH: Christine has a job. She runs her own company, she dates people and she's pretty.

TO: We make fun of her for doing it all herself, that she doesn't have a

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Tricia O'Kelley and Alex Kapp Horner

Photos: Warwick Saint

It's all laughs when Tricia O'Kelley and Alex Kapp Horner get together for lunch at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel.

nanny. And we don't want to admit that she probably has a better relationship with her ex than we have with our husbands. She definitely has a better relationship with her son than we have with our children.

JC: Speaking of pretty Christine, what is it like working with Julia Louis-Dreyfus?

TO: We all have a little crush on Julia.

AKH: Major. Just this morning, Tricia sent someone an e-mail, and cc'd me and Julia. About an hour ago, I opened up my phone and was like, "Julia wrote back!"

TO: I broke down and cried when they introduced the cast the night we taped the first episode. When they announced Julia, the crowd went wild, and I thought, "Oh my God, we get to work with this woman!" I have respected her work for as long as I can remember. I loved her on *Saturday Night Live*, and even *Day by Day*. And *Seinfeld* certainly! Then we always thought after the first season we'd kind of get over the awe, but we haven't. We feel closer to her now, but still...

AKH: It's like she's a senior and we're the freshmen.

JC: Tricia, you're about to get married and may someday want to start a family. If and when you do, do you think that the producers will write your pregnancy into the show?

TO: Alex and I have actually talked about this, that I'm definitely going to try for a baby. And Alex is such a good friend and team player, she's actually said, "When you start trying, let me know and I'll try, too." Not only so that I don't have to be pregnant by myself, but for the good of the show [laughs.] It would be fun, and funny for the characters to be pregnant together, too.

AKH: My husband really wants to have another, but I've been kind of reluctant to go through it all again. But recently we were at work, talking about the fact that we both were thinking about sometime in the near future getting pregnant, and Julia started saying, "You should do it! It would be so cool if you had babies at the same time! Do it! Do it! I love it!" And so I called my husband and said, "Well, I know you've been talking about it for a long time, but [laughs] Julia and I have just decided that you and I are going to get pregnant." That's how enamored of her we both are. We were like, "Really? Should we do it? Okay!"

JC: Julia herself had to be hidden behind couches and oversized gift boxes when she was pregnant during *Seinfeld*. Isn't it unusual to work on a show where you're encouraged to have a baby?

TO: Emily Rutherford, who plays New Christine, just had a baby in June. She reassured Kari that she wouldn't start showing that much until the end of the season, but Kari said, "It doesn't matter. Get pregnant as many



times as you want—we'll write it into the show. It's good news. Be happy!" Kari is just really incredibly supportive.

JC: What about for Marly and Lindsay themselves—any stories you'd like to see?

AKH: I'd love to see what happens if one of them gets divorced but the other doesn't. So one starts dating, and maybe even now has more in common with Christine. I like the idea of there being a wedge. Because it's happened a little bit already. There are times when Christine will say something and I'll sort of agree with her, and Marly will look at me like, "Don't agree with her!" And I'm like, "Sorry! Sorry!" With three women, there's always that dynamic of two against one. So far it has always been us against Christine. But what if it were a different combination?

JC: You mentioned a possible divorce for one of the Meanie Moms. We already know they're not happily married. Do you think either one of you will be getting any man action in the future?

AKH: I hope so. Her husband's already cheated on her.

TO: I want to cheat on him. I'm hoping for a boyfriend or lover.

AKH: I want them to start acting out.

TO: I hope it's like a tennis instructor.

AKH: Or a Cuban lawn boy or something. I feel like I want them to start crumbling. I want the facade to start breaking apart and fall away a little bit. Slowly—very, very subtly—it seems like things are already starting.

JC: It sounds like you're happy staying just where you are.

TO: For the first eight or so years out of college, I really struggled. The waiting tables thing, and I took out loans. I'm not saying you have to struggle to feel grateful, but it certainly helps. We know where we came from and how hard it was to get here, so now it's sweeter, I think. Because we worked so hard for it.

AKH: And I was just thinking last night how the word "gratitude" has come out of my mouth more in the last two years than ever before. I do have to take a step back if I'm not having a great day or something and remember where I am in relation to where I might have been. My husband and I went to dinner and a movie the other night, and the bartender's head shot was up on the wall. I started to think, "Wow, I could be in so many different places than where I am now." I'm so appreciative that I get to sit in my really pretty bedroom watching my plasma TV, knowing I have two healthy kids, and friends. It sounds corny but I really am grateful. I'm not a big star and nobody knows who I am, but I'm telling you, I can't believe how lucky I am. ♣

Photos: Monty Britton