



EDITOR'S LETTER

Call me the Grinch that stole Halloween, but I'm really just not that into it.

My kids are asking for new costumes and the youngest yelps in fear every time she sees the spooky decorations in our local shops.

My main gripe is I don't like answering the door to strangers, let alone 10 noisy kids on a sugar high.

Yes, I'm one of those people who switches off the lights and pretends not to be home.

But, my kids love it.

So, this year, we're going to head out to a party, and I'll be supervising a bunch of door-knocking kids – if my youngest is brave enough to leave the house, that is!

Emma Nolan
Editor TV WEEK



This week we... WENT GAGA FOR LADY GAGA

Do we get starstruck here at TV WEEK? Sometimes. But, this is different. When our US writer, **Jenny Cooney Carrillo** (above left), got an invite to sit down with pop megastar **Lady Gaga** for *American Horror Story: Hotel*, she couldn't believe what she encountered. "I don't often rave about stars I'm interviewing," Jenny says. "But, Lady Gaga (above and left, with her *American Horror Story: Hotel* co-star Matt Bomer, who plays Donovan) was humble, funny, smart and vulnerable. "Heck, she even cried at one point!" Adding the singer's acting chops were equally as impressive, it would appear the pop icon has a new fan! "I've now become one of her little monsters for life!" Jenny enthuses. **Turn to page 16 for Jenny's in-depth – and extremely candid – interview.**

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'I li IN

She's a trailblazer in her pop career, but letting go in *American Horror Story: Hotel* was a breath of fresh air for Lady Gaga

Plain Jane she most definitely is not! Check out Lady Gaga's top five most outrageous outfits at tvweek.com.au

ke not being CONTROL'

Has there been a more anticipated TV character in recent times than The Countess in *American Horror Story: Hotel*?

The reason for the excitement is that The Countess' portrayer is none other than music icon Lady Gaga!

The 29-year-old is no stranger to the public eye, nor to pushing boundaries – something *AHS* has also been known to do. So, it would appear to be the perfect meeting of creative minds.

What a lot of people don't know is, Gaga is a trained actor. Ten years spent studying at the Strasberg Method means she fully embraced the 100-year-old Countess.

"When I'm Gaga, I am not acting – that is part of me," she explains to TV WEEK.

"In a way, I'm not acting when I'm The Countess. Where I am in my life is who I am and where I exist in that moment. I'm grateful I'm allowed to have that."

Admitting to finding it "very difficult to go home every night after work", the role has been eye-opening for the superstar.

What a role to sink your teeth into!

I always wanted to be an actress, but I've never filmed on an actual set before, so I was extremely nervous. I've never been as nervous as that day, except when I took to the stage at the Oscars.

What interests you about acting?

It's good for someone as rebellious as me to have parameters or I can get out of hand! [Laughs] When I go home, I don't want to be on top of a man or a woman. I like to be taken. So, this is a nice change of sexual position.

[Laughs] It feels good to have someone else driving my desire. I'm finding a million new things about myself, what I want and who I want to be. Most

importantly, I've actually found a place to put so much pain and anguish that I had nowhere to put. You can put it in your music, but that's not always what people want from me in my music, is it?

And what of giving yourself over to someone else's artistry and vision?

I'm more loyal to [co-creator, executive producer and director] Ryan Murphy than I am even to myself at this moment, as he is the artist. I always wanted to be an actress, but it was never important to me

that I was in control of the art. What was important to me is that I allowed the art to be in control of me. And I don't have to watch it afterwards and decide what's good and what's bad. Ryan does. That's a freedom I'm not allowed on my own and it's why I like being an actress, because I'm simply here to serve the giver.

What are your first impressions of your *Hotel* character, The Countess?

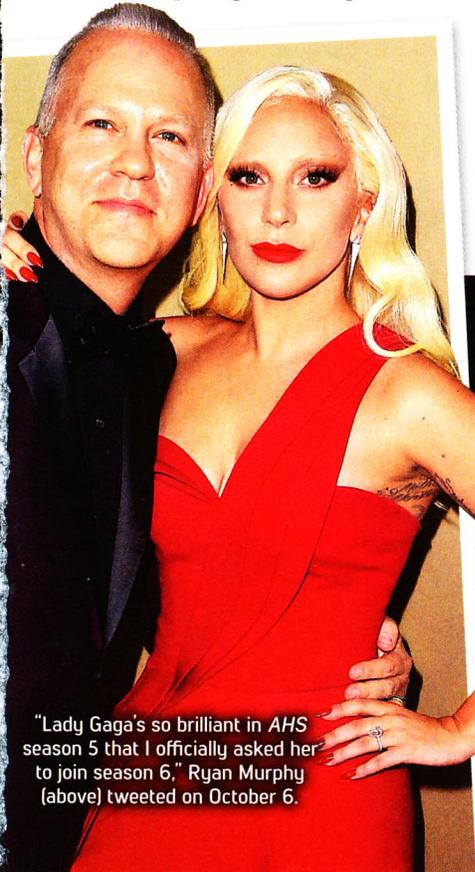
I don't think of The Countess as an outsider. In her mind, she's not feminine or masculine – she's a monster, but in the most kind of grand, amazing, glamorous kind of way. She finds her condition is what makes her powerful, the thing that makes

her unique. All of the challenges of her life, being alive more than 100 years, she's not only learnt a lot of lessons, but become strong in her vulnerability. The feminine wisdom you see comes from a place of sexual power for her – she is 25 forever! So, the power comes from the fact that on the outside she is young and naive, but on the inside she is wise and ancient. It's her intelligence that makes her powerful.

Why is empowerment so vital to you?

Well, I suppose that's the big question

"When I'm Gaga, I am not acting"



"Lady Gaga's so brilliant in *AHS* season 5 that I officially asked her to join season 6," Ryan Murphy (above) tweeted on October 6.



TURN OVER FOR MORE >>>

Gaga is dressed to kill – literally – as *Hotel*'s villainess, The Countess.

That must have helped to put you at ease...

I can't tell you what something like that means to me. I don't know if it's good and I don't know if it's bad. All I know is that I asked my manager to allow me, please, to do something that feels f*****g real. Please don't ask me to exist in a universe where there is impostor after impostor. I go on that set each day and I'm never reading b*****t. No-one is acting and we're having real moments. It's what the f**k it's all about. I just am really excited.

You sound like you're in a very good place professionally right now. What else makes you feel happy or content?

I've always felt some sort of need to help people who feel isolated in the world. I grew up with a tremendous amount of depression that's hereditary in my family, and I am Catholic and Italian. So, that means that medication, therapy, doctors and mental wellbeing isn't really on the cards. So, as I got older and isolated myself, it was the music that gave me freedom, it was the art that gave me freedom. So, I always wanted to help anyone who feels isolated and feels like, through creativity and through their own imagination, they can become whatever it is they choose to be.

On the flip side, what makes you angry?

I am irate with people who are cruel. It is like I watch society today – people bitching and moaning at each other and fighting over the internet – and it feels stupid. It feels unimportant and like it's totally missing the point. What I would like to be a part of – and what I know Ryan is a part of – is keeping show business alive in the most elegant and glamorous of ways. He's using it to remind people of good messages, as well as hard lessons. The themes that are happening in *Hotel* echo throughout the universe.

How so, exactly?

People don't communicate anymore. We are addicted to our phones and the rush, and we are addicted to ourselves and not each other. A lot of

"I grew up with tremendous depression"

the characters in this season of *American Horror Story* are decidedly narcissistic and consumed with their own s**t. And we will do anything to survive. On the one hand, I want people to walk away with that – how you should do whatever it takes to be happy. On the other hand, why are we allowing us as a society to get out of control to the point where we can no longer even affect one another? Until it just becomes an endless battle? That's what is so brilliant about Ryan, it's what is brilliant about the show and I think that is what makes great TV.

On a more personal level, how are things with your fiancé, Taylor Kinney [aka Kelly Severide in *Chicago Fire*]?

Our connection is very spiritual. It's as though I was a lioness in a field and I simply was looked at by a very brave lion. It takes a very strong man to be able to accept and put up

with – and feel big – around all of this. But, I feel that you meet some people and it's like, "I was put here to take care of you." That's how I feel about love. I used to think that, other than my father, there would be no man who was strong enough to take care of me. Then, I met Taylor.

Has Taylor given you any acting tips?

Yes. I spent two hours on the phone with him the other morning, because I was having a hard time with the scene. It's very emotional. I go home at night and I don't feel well and I'm not able to be present with him always in the moment, as I'm still on set. And what a strong man it is who can say to you, "Welcome to the club!" [Laughs]



Lady Gaga's beau, Taylor, only has eyes for her.



LADY GAGA ON...

...the well-developed conscience of a megastar

HER UPBRINGING

"My father's sister died when she was 19. She had lupus. He was 15 and something about him losing her early in his life really destroyed him. My grandparents came on a boat from Sicily and Venice. My family worked from nothing – and that would be all OK, because no matter where we ended up, we always had each other. And, so, I have a fighting ambition within me to transgress the limitations of your economic status."

THE THEMES OF HOTEL

"Ryan's telling you, 'Is what's going on in my hotel worse than what is going on in the real world? Or is it the same and I just have the balls to point it out?'"

HER MANY NAMES

"I get called many different things. I get called Gaga all the time and I respond to it and appreciate it as if it were my real name. I also respond to Stephanie, Steph and Steffie. My father, Joseph (above, with Cynthia, Lady Gaga's mum), calls me Loopy and my lover calls me Babe."

LETTING IT GO

"On my first day, I got a note from [fellow *Hotel* actress] Sarah Paulson that said, 'You belong here, just let it fly.' A few years ago, I stopped letting it fly, because I felt so judged. And it's not because I'm weak, or maybe it is, I don't care. It's because I grew much more aware of the microscope I was under, and I'm much more powerful when I'm unaware of it."

AMERICAN HORROR STORY: HOTEL
Monday, 9.30pm, Eleven