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General Hospital

# Interview: Carolyn Hennesy Talks Tight Soap Budgets, Nearly Becoming a Gymnast, and Cabin Fever



Rande Dawn

About 2 Hours Ago



Image: Jill Johnson/JPI

**General Hospital actress reveals the key to having a long Hollywood career.**

Having to quarantine solo isn't easy, but Carolyn Hennesy is making the best of it, as she told Soaps.com. And we're not surprised that Hennesy knows how to keep things moving: She appears on the soap opera *General Hospital* (Diane Miller) and has turned up on CBS' *The Young and the Restless* (Penelope); she earned a 2017 Daytime Emmy

for her portrayal of Karen on digital soap *The Bay* and she has a pre-nomination this year for *Studio City* (Gloria). Hennesy chatted with us about loving Diane, why we all still love soaps, and finding the time to get her kitchen cabinets clean.

**Soaps.com:** How are you bearing up under quarantine?

**Carolyn Hennesy:** Things are exceptionally productive at my house. Cabin fever has not yet set in, although I am expecting it at any moment. I've organized all the files on my computer, I've washed all the glass cabinet fronts in my kitchen, and I'm about to do my floor today.

**Soaps.com:** You already have a Daytime Emmy from your work on *The Bay*, which like *Studio City* is a digital, web-based soap. How is making a web soap different than working on something like *General Hospital*?

**Hennesy:** You have a far shorter period of time, believe it or not. On a soap you shoot episodes over a period of days; for a web series, sometimes you're shooting the entire season over a weekend. It can be very intricate and it's a delicate balancing act. But you also have a tremendous amount of freedom that you do not otherwise have in the stringent soap world. You can improvise a little bit more; we can also tackle topics that are still not allowed on soaps.

**More:** [Interview, Hennesy talks wish-list for Diane](#)

**Soaps.com:** I imagine the budget is a wee bit smaller, too, when you're shooting a digital series.

**Hennesy:** Well, we lost our craft services at *General Hospital* years ago. Budgets are very tight on the soaps these days, but you are correct. At *Studio City* we were taken very good care of, though.

**Soaps.com:** Tell me a little about Gloria, and what made her *Studio City* story this season pre-nomination worthy.

**Hennesy:** As we just mentioned, budgets have been slashed for soaps all over the globe – and Gloria's network is the same. [On *Studio City*, Gloria is an executive producer of a show-within-the-show called

*Hearts on Fire.*] So she's dealing with, "How do I make these cuts?" And her first thought is, "How can I possibly get rid of a pain-in-the-ass star who's costing me a lot of money?" So she has serious money concerns, and we see her crying at her desk. There are depths to be plumbed with Gloria; she's not just a hard-ass woman.

**More:** [Carolyn Hennesy's Studio City red carpet arrival](#)

**Soaps.com:** Speaking of your characters, what's your favorite part about playing Diane?

**Hennesy:** My dear, I could list the parts that *aren't* my favorite parts faster than I could my favorite parts. She's spunky, she's funny, she's the smartest thing in the room, chic, loyal, loving and kind when it counts. Also ruthless in the best possible way, and she doesn't suffer fools.

**Soaps.com:** You come out of a Hollywood family – your father was an Oscar-winning production designer, and your aunt Barbara Rush was an actress with soap credits. Were you always destined to become an actress?

**Hennesy:** There was a brief flirtation with gymnastics when I was 11, but that was tragic – because I was awful. I was drawn to acting when I was 4 and walked on my first soundstage – it was my father's film, *Fantastic Voyage*, and I knew instantly. It was like something put life into me and smacked me in the head at the same time.

**More:** [General Hospital airs flashback Friday episodes through May](#)

**Soaps.com:** You've been acting since the 1990s, and since then soap operas have undergone a lot of changes – but they proliferate on the web. What does this say to you about audience appetites for soaps?

**Hennesy:** We're still desperate for them. We want our daily stories. We need these wonderful, funny, poignant, perilous, death-defying throughlines that don't often mirror our own lives, so we can live vicariously. And sometimes, we can be educated. For most people it's not necessarily an educational medium, it's escapism and necessary because so many of us are living lives of quiet desperation, and we

want to know that we're doing better than our favorite character on a soap – or not doing as well and how we can do better. And sometimes, you just need a good laugh. There's also nothing like a good revenge story.

*More: Interview, Days actor on playing a soap villain*

**Soaps.com:** What's the key to having a long career in Hollywood?

**Hennesy:** Don't take anything personally. If I could bottle that particular trait, I'd leave acting and go into the bottling business. You take nothing personally, you realize the sun will always come up the following day. Nothing is permanent; people have short memories and kind hearts, and if you have an attitude that there's always room for everyone at the top, it will sustain you. And realize that every morning you wake up, if you decide that day that you're not an actor, you need to leave the business. There's only one reason to act – ever – and that's because you have to.

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