

## MPTD Interview with Carol Flaisher

**Basheerah Abdusshahid:** Hi, and thanks for joining us here at "Reel Talk with Film DC." I'm Basheerah, an intern with the DC Office of Motion Picture and Television Development. Joining us on this show today is Carol Flaisher, a local location manager. How are you today, Carol?

**Carol Flaisher:** Very well, Basheerah. How are you?

**Basheerah:** I'm fine, thank you. How did you get your start in the industry?

**Carol:** I volunteered with a girlfriend at the Kennedy Center for a very big show. I think it was a Kennedy Center Honors. From there, I started to volunteer on anything I could -- movie sets, commercials. Started at the bottom and worked up.

**Basheerah:** Did you always know that you wanted to work in the industry?

**Carol:** I did. I wanted to be a movie star, but I seem to have found a place for myself behind the scenes.

**Basheerah:** What would you be doing today if you weren't a location manager?

**Carol:** Good question. I think I started out wanting to be a speech pathologist, but that really wasn't my calling, if you will. I don't know. I think it would've been something in the entertainment field, but I'm not quite sure where. I surely can't say.

**Basheerah:** [laughs] Tell us a little bit about a typical day on the set as a location manager.

**Carol:** As a location manager, I make it a point to be the very, very first one there -- maybe a half-hour to an hour, even longer, in front of the company -- to make sure the parking is ready, the coffee is hot, the police are there, and everything is set for the crew to arrive.

**Basheerah:** When you begin to work on a project, what unique insights, skill, and vision do you bring to your work?

**Carol:** Patience. [laughs] That's another interesting question, because there are so many different personalities who work in our industry, so many different personalities who are location managers. When you say unique, I think each one of us are. The job always gets done. It's just a matter of how you do it in terms of your unique skills. In my case, I'm a talker, and I can just talk-talk-talk, and I get a lot of things done just by doing that. If I keep talking, eventually I'll wear them down and they'll say yes to anything.

**Basheerah:** [laughs] What has been your most memorable experience in your career?

**Carol:** There's never just one. There's always lots of them. Because of my experience as a location manager, my name is kind of out there. I do a lot of TV commercials, industrials, politicals. For example, I've worked with Bill Clinton and George Bush on the same day. That was

a pretty cool day. I've met a lot of movie stars and that sort and a lot of notables, American and non-American.

I think it's always been the experience of meeting certain people or having an opportunity to stand there and have a coffee with Ridley Scott and just chat about everyday things, or take Oliver Stone from place to place on a day, and every time we would get in the car, he wanted to know what I was doing at the same time that I was so curious about what he was doing.

I'd say my memorable experiences are really the people I've worked with.

**Basheerah:** What was it like on the set of that project, the one with Bill Clinton and President Bush?

**Carol:** I was so excited. I'm looking for words to tell you how excited we all were, because it was the first time -- it was when the two presidents, Bush and Clinton, made a public-service announcement from the White House trying to raise money for the tsunami. There was lots of preparation. We were told we only had both of the presidents for a very short time, and I'd have to say my heart was beating so loud. I was so happy to be there. I've worked with lots of presidents, but never two at the same time. They liked each other and they laughed with each other, and as they relaxed, the rest of the crew relaxed as they did. That was the highlight of my day -- of my career, actually.

**Basheerah:** What has been your most memorable experience as a location manager here in DC?

**Carol:** Well, I don't think I could put a one thing on it, "the best," over and above. Some of the things that I'm most proud of is I blew up -- that's nice, to start that way...

**Basheerah:** [laughs]

**Carol:** I blew up Eastern Market as a Dutch market.

**Basheerah:** Oh, that's awesome.

**Carol:** That was a pretty memorable experience, the fact that we were able to pull it off, the fact that it looked fabulous in the movie, and the fact that I can say I did it. It was a big deal. I specifically remember that event.

**Basheerah:** What projects are you currently working on?

**Carol:** Working on two projects. One is "House of Cards," which is actually not filming here, but it does second unit here, and they come and go, off and on. That's directed by David Fincher and stars Kevin Spacey, so that's a pretty exciting project. As well as "White House Down," which is a Roland Emmerich project, which is yet again blowing things up. I seem to get myself caught up in that. When they come to Washington, they loved it, they'd like to film here, but I think due to finances and whatever other reasons, they'll just simply do plates here.

**Basheerah:** What are the pros and cons of being a location manager?

**Carol:** Let's see. The cons are lack of sleep. I'll go with the cons first. Lack of sleep. We're well-paid by the day, but I wouldn't say we're in it for the money. It isn't like a pot of gold at the end of that rainbow. There's a lot of personal satisfaction, because they hand you a puzzle and you have to put those pieces together, and when you put those pieces together, that's when I feel like I've accomplished something or given something back. The world loves entertainment, and to be a part of it and to give it back, it may not be your cup of tea, this movie or that movie, but overall the world is looking for good entertainment, a way to relax and to get away and to escape, and I like being a part of that.

**Basheerah:** What advice would you give to the aspiring film professional?

**Carol:** I've been asked this question a lot through the years. My feeling is, you have to be specific and know exactly what it is you want to do. That doesn't mean it can't change as you go along, but if you have a direction and you work towards that direction, instead of being wishy-washy, "I want to be in the industry, but I don't know what I want to do." That's a little bit more difficult, because then you're floundering. If you have a direction and you work towards that direction, it's a lot easier for someone to get ahead in that. Say you want to be in the camera department. Then find yourself a job at a camera company, or intern for a cameraman, or carry their luggage, their film cases. There are ways to work into that direction.

If you want to be a writer, that's a very difficult one. That's an ambiguous thing. How do you become a writer? Well, you're born with it. There's training to be had.

I also tell kids, when they're starting out, have another career. Do something else. This is something you can fall into, you can do as a hobby that turns into a lifestyle. In my case, I was a housewife, and I said, "Oh, this looks like fun." That was 35 years ago. I've been at it ever since.

I think the most important thing is to have a direction and know what it is you'd like to do. It just makes it a little easier.

**Basheerah:** Thanks for joining us today, Carol, and thank you to all of you listening. Follow us on Twitter @DCFilmOffice, like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/filmDC](http://www.facebook.com/filmDC), or check us out on the web at [film.dc.gov](http://film.dc.gov). This is Basheerah signing out for "Reel Talk with Film DC." Catch you next time.