



**Nikki
DeLoach**

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Nikki DeLoach

Two Turtle Doves (Hallmark Movies & Mysteries)

Love Takes Flight (Hallmark Channel)

Born in a small town in South Georgia, Nikki DeLoach always knew she wanted to be an entertainer. She started dancing at the age of three, eventually adding singing, modeling and acting to her repertoire. All her hard work paid off when at age 12, DeLoach became a member of *The Mickey Mouse Club*, alongside Justin Timberlake, Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and Ryan Gosling. After “MMC,” DeLoach spent several years in Los Angeles pursuing acting and landed a starring role opposite Mark Wahlberg and Bill Paxton in the feature film *Traveller*, and the TV series *Misery Loves Company*. She also played Anthony LaPaglia’s daughter in the television movie *Never Give Up: The Jimmy V Story*. In 1997, DeLoach put her acting career on hold to enter the world of pop music, signing with RCA and BMG Records to become part of the girl group Innosense. When the group disbanded in 2003, DeLoach returned to Hollywood and has gone on to enjoy a successful and diverse acting career.

DeLoach’s recent credits include her starring role on MTV’s critically acclaimed series, *Awkward*, where she was considered one of television’s “hottest moms” with her portrayal of Lacey Hamilton. Although she is perhaps best known for her roles on *Awkward* and the iconic *The Mickey Mouse Club*, DeLoach has also been guest starring on some of TV’s biggest hit shows, including *NCIS*, *Criminal Minds*, *CSI*, *CSI: NY*, *Cold Case*, *Mad Men* and *Without a Trace*, among many others. She was also a series regular on the popular show *North Shore*. Her films include *Love & Other Drugs*, *Flying Lessons*, opposite Maggie Grace and Hal Holbrook, and the French comedy *Hollywoo*. Hallmark Channel viewers will also recognize DeLoach from her starring roles in the network’s original movies *The Perfect Catch*, *Christmas Land*, *A Dream of Christmas*, *Truly, Madly, Sweetly*, and *Love Takes Flight*, which premiered as a Hallmark Hall of Fame presentation. She also developed, executive produced, and starred in *Reunited at Christmas* and returned to the network in the 2019 Christmas movie *Two Turtle Doves*, opposite Michael Rady.

Outside of acting, DeLoach is dedicated to sharing her passions and ideas with others. She co-founded What We Are, a community of women that celebrates their unfiltered selves. She is also a passionate supporter and spokesperson for Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and The Alzheimer’s Association. DeLoach also shares her love for acting by coaching at the renowned Warner Loughlin Studios. She currently resides in Los Angeles with her husband and two young sons, Hudson and Bennett.

Nikki DeLoach On Social Media

Verified on Instagram and Twitter



Instagram

[@nikdeloach](https://www.instagram.com/nikdeloach)



nikdeloach ✓



[@nikkideloach](https://twitter.com/nikkideloach)



Nikki DeLoach ✓

facebook

[@nikkideloach](https://www.facebook.com/nikkideloach)



Nikki DeLoach ✓

WHAT WE ARE

Women. All The Things.

<http://welcometowhatweare.com/>

Nikki DeLoach Press and Theatrical Reels



To view Nikki's press reel, please click here:

<https://lamediaworks.com/nikki-deloch-publicity-reel/>

To view Nikki's theatrical reel, please click here:

<https://lamediaworks.com/nikkideloach/>

Nikki DeLoach's Red Carpet Appearances

**Hallmark Channel
Summer TCA Event**



**Annual Elton John
AIDS Foundation
Academy Awards
Viewing Party**



**InStyle And Warner Bros.
Annual Golden Globe Awards
Post-Party**



People's Choice Awards



**Variety and Women
in Film Pre-Emmy
Event**



**Spike TV's Guys Choice
Awards**



**Audi Celebrates The 2014
Golden Globes Weekend**



Maxim's Hot 100 Women



**Entertainment Weekly's
Celebration Honoring
the SAG Awards
Nominees**



**People StyleWatch Annual
Denim Awards Issue**



Do Something Awards



MTV Movie Awards



Nikki DeLoach Presenting Appearances

Presenting at the Annual PRISM Awards



Presenting at the Annual Streamy Awards



Nikki Deloach at the 2019 Walk To End Alzheimer's in Los Angeles



Watch Nikki's red carpet interview with Meaww here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-4M-y-EzPk>

View all the Getty Images [here](#)

Watch the PSA here:
<https://vimeo.com/muellerproductionserv/review/342462401/8145853461>



Hallmark Reveals Casts for Two More Christmas Movies (Exclusive)



Hallmark Channel has locked up casts for two more holiday movies!

Network favorites Nikki DeLoach and Jen Lilley are headlining their own Christmas films as part of this year's 36 original holiday movies for Hallmark Channel and Hallmark Movies & Mysteries, ET can exclusively reveal.

DeLoach will star in her third Hallmark holiday movie, toplining *Christmas Reunited* opposite Mike Faiola for Hallmark Movies & Mysteries, which she will also executive produce. DeLoach previously led 2015's *Christmas Land* and 2016's *A Dream of Christmas*.

In *Christmas Reunited*, DeLoach plays novelist Samantha, who, frazzled and struggling with writer's block, heads home to her late grandmother's home -- alongside her boyfriend -- to spend Christmas there. While at home with family, her grandmother's wise words reveal the true meaning of Christmas to Samantha at a time when she most needs encouragement.

Read the exclusive here:

<https://www.etonline.com/hallmark-reveals-casts-for-two-more-christmas-movies-exclusive-109043>

'Awkward' Star Nikki DeLoach: 'The Tables Are Turned' (Video)



Read and watch the interview here:

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/awkward-star-nikki-deloch-tables-650297>



'Awkward': Nikki DeLoach Previews Summer Finale

Read the exclusive here:

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/csi-awkwards-nikki-deloch-guest-426209>

'Awkward' Star Books Suspicious Role on 'CSI' (Exclusive)

Read the interview here:

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/awkward-nikki-deloch-previews-summer-565744>

**‘Awkward’s’ Nikki DeLoach
Talks Tough Love and Jenna’s
‘Dark Place’**



Read the interview here:

<https://www.thewrap.com/awkwards-nikki-de-loach-talks-tough-love-jennas-dark-place/>



**‘NCIS’ Drafts MTV’s ‘Awkward’
Star Nikki DeLoach
(Exclusive)**

Read the exclusive here:

<https://www.thewrap.com/ncis-drafts-mtv-s-awkward-star-nikki-deloch-exclusive/>

**‘Awkward’s’ Nikki DeLoach, ‘You’re
the Worst’ Star Aya Cash Cast on
USA’s ‘Sirens’ (Exclusive)**

Read the exclusive here:

<https://www.thewrap.com/awkwards-nikki-deloch-youre-the-worst-star-aya-cash-cast-on-usas-sirens-exclusive/>

Nikki DeLoach Joins ‘The Jury’ ABC Pilot



Awkward alumna **Nikki DeLoach** is set as a series regular opposite Jeremy Sisto, Archie Panjabi and Kevin Rankin in ABC's murder trial drama pilot, *The Jury*. Written by VJ Boyd and Mark Bianculli, and executive produced by Carol Mendelsohn, *The Jury* examines "the ultimate social experiment" that happens thousands of times a day in the U.S.: A person's fate is placed in the hands of 12 strangers. Described as "*12 Angry Men* meets the podcast *Serial*," the series follows a single murder trial a season as seen through the eyes of the individual jurors, exploring the biases and experiences that influence the jurors' judgment and how their preconceptions change along the way. DeLoach will play Haley, a beautiful, stylish Southern Belle who uses her flirtatious charm to cover the tragedy of her real life, which is spiraling out of control. DeLoach starred as Lacey Hamilton on all five seasons of MTV's *Awkward* and also appeared on *NCIS*, *Major Crimes*, *Criminal Minds* and *Castle*, among others. She's repped by APA, More/Medavoy Management, and Morris Yorn Barnes & Levine.

Read the exclusive here:

<https://deadline.com/2016/03/nikki-delouch-cast-the-jury-abc-pilot-austin-hebert-spark-1201717664>

Nikki DeLoach Teases *Awkward* Holiday Reunion, Recalls 'Surreal' Experience on *Grey's Anatomy* and More



All Nikki DeLoach wanted for Christmas was an *Awkward* reunion, and she got it... a few months early. The actress formerly known as Lacey Hamilton is currently filming opposite her MTV husband Mike Faiola in Hallmark Channel's *Reunited at Christmas*, a considerably more serious holiday movie than you might expect from the feel-good network.

"It's a different kind of Christmas movie than I've ever done," DeLoach tells TVLine. "It's a family that has gone through a divorce, and they're all being brought back together again at Christmas. This is a real ensemble Christmas movie. It's been challenging, but also super rewarding. I think audiences will really connect with and relate to it." As for reuniting with Faiola, she says, "It's been really fun to do something with him again. Sometimes we sit around set and talk about *Awkward* and how special it was."

But first, you can catch DeLoach in Hallmark's *Truly, Madly, Sweetly*, premiering Saturday at 9/8c. DeLoach stars as Natalie, a baker who has to start from scratch (get it?) when her ex-boyfriend runs off with her cupcake recipes — and uses them to become famous. When Natalie's baking mentor passes away, she finds herself at odds with the mentor's nephew (played by *Arrow*'s Dylan Neal) who believes his aunt's company should be sold rather than saved. "It's a Hallmark movie, so there's a happy ending," DeLoach says. (Spoiler alert?) "But it's all about the fun way we get to the happy ending." (OK, phew.)

In honor of DeLoach and Faiola's on-screen reunion, TVLine invited her to walk down TV memory lane, recalling some of her favorite memories from *Awkward*, as well as her guest spots on shows like *Grey's Anatomy*, *Mad Men* and *Castle*.

Read the interview here:

<https://tvline.com/2018/09/22/awkward-reunion-christmas-movie-photos-nikki-deloch-interview/>

People

'I Didn't Know If My Son Would Live': Nikki DeLoach on Her Newborn's Risky Open-Heart Surgery



Nikki DeLoach was devastated to learn at five months pregnant that her unborn son, Bennett Christopher Goodell, had multiple heart defects and might not survive. Now the former Awkward star, 38, opens up to PEOPLE about her family's emotional journey to bringing Bennett home:

I was so excited to go to the doctor.

I remember with my first pregnancy how at 5 months they're able to use 3-D technology to let you almost see what your child's face and hands and fingers look like. It was just amazing and I couldn't wait to do it again. But as I lied there watching the technician do a fetal echocardiogram, I noticed she was spending a lot of time on one specific area. My husband [entertainment lawyer Ryan Goodell] saw my face and asked what was wrong. I asked the technician if everything was okay and she said, "You'll have to wait for the doctor." I instantly knew in my heart. I told my husband, "Something's not right. Something's not right ..." He said, "Don't jump to conclusions," but I just knew something was wrong.

Then the doctor came in and gave us the news that our baby had multiple heart defects. I was inconsolable. He had a ventricular septal defect (or VSD), which is a small hole in his heart, his aorta was narrow, his coronary artery would have to be moved, and he had a transposition of his great arteries, which meant the two arteries that go into his heart were going into the wrong chambers.

Even thinking about it now makes me so emotional because you love your kid so much. I already knew what it was to love a child because I already had my son [William, now 4,] and all of a sudden we didn't know if we were going to get to continue on with the pregnancy. I thought I knew what it was like to have my heart broken, but when you get news like that about your child you can literally feel your heart break into two pieces.

The next few months were incredibly difficult as they did test after test. The waiting for the results was awful. And then we'd be told, "The results weren't clear. We need to do another test." And then more waiting. For an entire month we were waiting to find out if our pregnancy was something that we would be able to continue with. I didn't know if my son would live. It was paralyzing.

But there were two things that kept me going: my family and my faith. My son put a smile on my face every day no matter how upset I was and I had faith that everything was going to work out for the highest good of all. I truly believed that.

When you go through something like this, there is an instinct to not say anything and just hide out and isolate yourself. But I had gone through really serious, suicidal postpartum depression after the birth of my first son and I learned that isolating yourself is the last thing you need to do. You need to reach out to others and let them hold you up, let them be an anchor for you when you can't be an anchor for yourself. For me, my anchor became my husband. We have never been closer than after going through this together.

And reaching out to our community was so important. It was through a friend of mine that I was connected with Kelly Zajfen, she's the woman behind the children's clothing line [Little Minis](#) and her daughter had gone through heart surgery. I told Kelly our story and she instantly put us in contact with a whole team of people at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and they immediately made me feel welcome and as though we would be in the best hands possible when the time came.

Bennett was born Sept. 20 — a birthday he shares with Papa, my late grandfather — and the very next day we were in the hospital headed to CHLA in hopes they could save his life. On Sept. 25 Bennett went in to surgery and cardiothoracic surgeon Vaughn Starnes did the impossible by successfully completing procedures that most kids do not survive.



But we weren't out of the woods yet. For two weeks we stayed by Bennett's side as he recovered from surgery. They had to leave his heart open for a few days so I could literally see my son's heart beating outside his chest. They would have to blow him up like a marshmallow as part of the process of keeping him alive.

None of this was easy to watch, and four nights after the surgery I was in a particularly vulnerable state. I was trying not to fall apart but I had reached my breaking point and I couldn't hold the tears back any longer. I've forever grateful to one of the night nurses who just held me as I sobbed. She looked at me and said, "It's going to be okay. Look at me, I do this every day with these kids, he is going to be okay. I promise you." It was such a critical turning point for me because (a) I believed her and (b) I just needed someone to hold me and tell me that. I couldn't have gone through what I did without every single nurse that helped us. I'm still very emotional but I feel so blessed because not all families come out of a situation like this with such great results.

Bennet may have to have another heart surgery in the future, but for now he's doing great and I'm so grateful because there has been a miracle bestowed on my whole family and I'll never forget that.

People keep asking, "How are you?" And, honestly, I'm in that place where I am still trying to process everything that happened. We brought Bennett home and the first week was really tough because every time he breathed weird or felt warm or sneezed, I panicked. Had he been just a regular kid I would have said it was normal newborn behavior, but because of the heart defect and insane surgery I really struggled through all of that. I think that's perfectly normal. I want mommies to know it's perfectly normal to have PTSD after going through something like we did. I think I'll be dealing with that for a while as I learn what it's like to raise a kid who was born with special circumstances. I'm sure he'll be saying, "Mom, leave me alone." I'm gonna be that helicopter parent constantly, "Are you okay?"

But now — except for what we call his Brave Bennet Scar, the scar on his chest from the surgery — you would just think he's a normal newborn doing all the normal newborn behavior. When he spits up on himself or on me or poops through his diaper or waking up every hour in the middle of the night, I'm actually excited. My nipples are going to fall off but I'm elated. He's holding his head up, he's smiling ... people say that's just gas but I don't care, I tell myself he's smiling at me.

Read the interview here:

<https://people.com/tv/nikki-delolach-son-bennett-heart-defects-surgery-interview-exclusive/>

People

***Awkward*'s Nikki DeLoach Is Pregnant!**



Things got adorably awkward between **Nikki DeLoach** and her *The Perfect Catch* costar **Andrew Walker** when she revealed to him that she is pregnant.

"From the moment he found out, he was, like, 'Oh I think I'm nauseous too.' And I'm, like, 'What are you doing?! No you're not!' " DeLoach tells Mark Steines and Debbie Matenopoulos in a PEOPLE exclusive clip from Friday's episode of *Home & Family*.

On the episode, Matenopoulos discusses the reality of "sympathy pains" — but DeLoach isn't having any of it.

"He's telling me ... he had back pain when his wife had back pain and he felt sick when she felt sick and I was, like, 'Stop talking ... no you didn't!' " says the former *Awkward* star, 37, who wed entertainment lawyer **Ryan Goodell** in 2009.

"My wife and I ... she'd be, like, 'You don't have the symptoms, Andrew,' " says Walker, who has a son with wife **Cassandra Troy**. "Your feet aren't swollen. You're not hungry all the time.' And I'm, like, 'But you want ramen, I want ramen too! You want pizza, I have this craving for pizza!' "

"That could possibly be true, but as a woman going through it ... I didn't want to hear it," jokes DeLoach.

DeLoach and Walker's episode of *Home & Family* airs Friday at 10 a.m. ET and *The Perfect Catch* premieres Saturday at 9 p.m. ET on Hallmark Channel.

Read the article and watch the video here:

<https://people.com/parents/nikki-deloch-pregnant-video-reveal-exclusive/>

HOME & FAMILY



Watch the most recent appearance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DmWwuKnnTk>

Watch the July 2018 Co-Hosting appearances here:

[Segment 1](#), [Segment 2](#), [Segment 3](#), [Segment 4](#), [Segment 5](#), [Segment 6](#), [Segment 7](#)

Watch the June 2018 Co-Hosting appearances here:

[Segment 1](#), [Segment 2](#), [Segment 3](#), [Segment 4](#)

Watch the February 2017 Co-Hosting appearance here: (Password: NikkiTV)

[Segment 1](#), [Segment 2](#), [Segment 3](#), [Segment 4](#), [Segment 5](#), [Segment 6](#), [Segment 7](#), [Segment 8](#),
[Segment 9](#), [Segment 10](#), [Segment 11](#), [Segment 12](#), [Segment 13](#)

Watch the second guest appearance here:

<https://vimeo.com/119506600> (Password: NikkiTV)

Watch the first guest appearance talking about Awkward here:

<https://vimeo.com/98441161> (Password: NikkiTV)

GOOD x MORNING FOOTBALL



Watch the interview here:

<https://vimeo.com/333642257> (Password: NikkiTV)

NOCHES CON PATANITO



Watch the interview here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2piQQYBnzA>



Nikki DeLoach talks new Hallmark Movie



Watch the interview here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPniAFZ4Iu8&feature=youtu.be>



Watch the interview here:

<http://www.foxla.com/good-day-la/296674121-video>



Watch the interview here:

<https://vimeo.com/377905204> (Password: NikkiTV)



Watch the interview here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDQ8Lz36R4M>



Watch the Q&A here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8X0ATiEfIXo&feature=youtu.be>

See the Getty Images here:

<https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/nikki-deloadch-sag?editorialproducts=entertainment&family=editorial&phrase=nikki%20deloadch%20sag&sort=best>



Watch the interview here:

<https://vimeo.com/110621171> (Password: NikkiTV)



Watch the appearance here:

<https://vimeo.com/116571663> (Password:
NikkiTV)

Watch first appearance here:

<https://vimeo.com/117339732> (Password:
NikkiTV)

Watch second appearance here:

<https://vimeo.com/118277855> (Password:
NikkiTV)

Watch third appearance here:

<https://vimeo.com/118281730> (Password:
NikkiTV)



Watch the interview here:

<https://vimeo.com/116516784> (Password: NikkiTV)



Watch the interview here:

<https://vimeo.com/119296021> (Password: NikkiTV)

KOST 103.5



Listen to the most recent interview here:

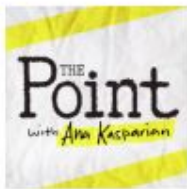
<https://www.iheart.com/podcast/735-ellen-k-after-show-29862577/episode/the-hallmark-channel-saved-her-babys-30891280/>



Watch the interview here:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=momsyAlBCTg>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZK4SbS0aILs&feature=relmfu>



Watch the 1st appearance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=breOIxcNHuQ>

Watch the 2nd appearance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Riz2Yi6Jctc&list=U>



Watch the appearance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYlcVWh5RvM>



Watch the appearance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d8JtGqi0aU>



Watch the 1st appearance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIZpKrYTUiY>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OO4Cf5xa-3A&list=PLvrd7e5MvH6vuAZGL1j4pK354sMq-n9g4&index=11>

Watch the 2nd appearance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8OgXKER8nA>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGE9eLtpXr8>

Watch the 3rd appearance here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdRtj_LJJ4U
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwpwIsOjGmI>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6gzBUKEIg8&feature=c4-overview&list=UUVa_VOxnPSJe49poc7DW2yQ



Watch the 1st appearance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wxq5YTGsrUo>

Soccer Player- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OphBicvaPmk>

Watch the 2nd appearance here:

1 hand catch - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCnyL2TSktY>

Baseball bat hole-in-1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ng1ljIqej9o>

Pro Bowl changes - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqGd-R51-eY>

MMA Fighter KTFO - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxkWSi0fYZg>

Oregon Ducks Locker Room

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DV4oeYIDNLk>

Tim Howard Penalty SV -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hone_YJjoso



Watch the 1st appearance here:

Baby Born with HIV Apparently Cured- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZlkjrdS2Js>

Hate and KKK Threat Shut Down- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MA-OsPiAIUU>

Internet Scam & Magic in West Africa- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3WLB37aVhQ>

Watch the 2nd appearance here:

Soccer Player Banned For Salute- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNA7JwZd660>

Look Like Barack Obama- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1S4Rgm5j1TU>

Factory Farm Animal Abuse Video Ban- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIKSvHMXB_8

Cigarette Display Ban- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCIYEMS_ej8

Nikki DeLoach Interview: The Awkward Star Talks What's in Her Purse!



Watch the interview here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnRxTEMcvzs>

—take part live



Watch the interview here:

<https://vimeo.com/119398505> (Password NikkiTV)

CALIFORNIA VIBE

NOV | DEC

HOLIDAY
HOME AND
GARDEN

GIFTS
WORTH
GIVING

HOSTESS
WITH THE
MOSTESS

CITY CHIC FASHION
3 TRENDS FOR
WINTER

MERRY
EVERYTHING
SEASONAL DÉCOR

SPICE UP
YOUR TABLE
FESTIVE & FIT
RECIPES

—48—
NOV | DEC

PRACTICA

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Makeup Ashley Beverly Cordova
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Few celebrities manage to balance real-life and spotlight perfectionism the way Nikki DeLoach does. The Hallmark star has made a major impact on the rom-com world since her first made-for-TV movie with the network in 2015. Yet this Southern girl is decidedly much more than just a pretty face.

Growing up in Georgia, Nikki credits her opportunity and inspiration primarily to one person: "A lot of it had to do with my grandmother ... she loved the movies, I mean loved the movies ... and I stayed with my grandmother a lot. I was with her probably at minimum three nights a week if not more. We would always go to the movie rental store ... and we would rent (especially if I stayed with her all weekend) five different movies—as many as they'd let us rent." They'd watch movies at night and eat popcorn together, Nikki recalls fondly.

Needless to say, she was hooked from girlhood. "My parents will tell you that at three years old I pointed to the TV and said, 'I want to do that!' ... There's never been a time in my life where I've never not known that becoming a storyteller was the thing that I wanted to do as far as my job."

At seven, Nikki really started to pursue professional work in the form of commercials and kids print work. And her grandmother went with her for all of it, even moving with Nikki to Orlando when she landed her first big break on *The Mickey Mouse Club* in the 1990s (cast alongside Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera, Keri Russell, and Ryan Gosling) when she was 12. "When the show was over, she moved with me to Los Angeles for work afterwards."

A slew of acting jobs followed, notably a starring role (opposite Mark Wahlberg and Bill Paxton) in the feature film *Traveller*. She was part of the main cast in the TV series *Misery Loves Company*, and played Anthony LaPaglia's daughter in the television movie *Never Give Up: The Jimmy V Story*.

But in 1997, Nikki decided to take a break from acting, shifting focus to the world of pop music. Signing with RCA and BMG Records, she became a member of the girl group Innosense. When the group disbanded six years later, Nikki reentered Hollywood with sustained success.

She has guest starred on some of TV's biggest hit shows, including *NCIS*, *Criminal Minds*, *CSI*, *CSI: NY*, *Cold Case*, *Mad Men*, and *Without a Trace*, to name a few, and was a series regular on the popular show *North Shore*. Nikki's films include *Love & Other Drugs*, *Flying Lessons* (opposite Maggie Grace and Hal Holbrook), and the French comedy *Hollywoo*.

And then came *Awkward*, a #1 scripted and critically acclaimed series from MTV, in 2011. For five years, Nikki portrayed Lacey Hamilton (one of television's "hottest moms") on the show. *Awkward* won a People's Choice Award for "Favorite Cable TV Comedy" and was nominated for "Favorite Dramedy" while on the air. It was while still on *Awkward* that Nikki got her first Hallmark movie role, which actually premiered on Christmas Eve.

"I was home in Georgia over the holidays, and we had a Christmas Eve service, and the pastor was like, 'We gotta get everybody through and get you guys home because Nikki DeLoach is gonna be on Hallmark tonight!' You're talking about a church that has 1,500 to 2,000 people," Nikki reminisces of the *Christmas*

“I love working in the genre of romantic comedies ... I want to make someone laugh and I also want to make them cry. I want to make them feel everything.”

Land debut. “The whole church went home and everyone watched my movie ... I’ve just never had that type of a reaction from my hometown. Granted, they weren’t really the demo for *Awkward*,” she says with a laugh.

“There was an energy, a really connective tissue that existed and I felt it when they would talk to me about the movie,” she realized. This experience and feedback deeply resonated within her. Nikki had always wanted to do a Hallmark Christmas movie—watching them, with a bottle of wine while wrapping presents and decorating, has been a secret guilty pleasure of hers for years.

The transition from TV series work to television movies answered multiple desires and needs in one stroke for Nikki. She and husband Ryan Goodell have two children: Hudson, who just started kindergarten, and Bennett, whose birth and risky open-heart surgery was featured in a *People* magazine exclusive in 2017.

Given the nature of her family’s personal needs at the time, Nikki’s schedule wasn’t exactly flexible. “It was actually perfect timing in my life for Hallmark to come in and be like, ‘We want to do more with you!’” Shorter shooting schedules allowed her to work and be a mother simultaneously, and she could take the kids with her if need be. “It just actually was the perfect working situation for me for the last couple of years in my life”

Plus, “I love working in the genre of romantic comedies ... I want to make someone laugh and I also want to make them cry. I want to make them feel everything.” Hallmark viewers will also recognize Nikki from her starring roles in the network’s original movies, including *The Perfect Catch*, *Christmas Land*, *A Dream of Christmas*, *Truly, Madly, Sweetly*, and *Love Takes Flight*, all of which premiered as a Hallmark Hall of Fame presentation.

Nikki’s experience and perfectionist tendencies shined when she developed, executive produced, and starred in *Reunited at Christmas*, which premiered on the network last November. “I loved it—I thrived!” Having worked in film and television in all genres and in so many performing capacities, “if you take everything, all the information, all the knowledge that I have and I bring to the table, it really honestly is the perfect amount of experience that lends itself to being a producer.”

Storytelling is a central theme in Nikki’s life. Referencing how she was raised, Nikki reached a point in her twenties where she was determined to be simply herself. “Growing up in the South, this was a hard thing for me because while I had this beautiful, idyllic childhood, there was also this expectation of perfection that I got from my family ... I was told everyday, ‘This is who you are.’” Of course nothing ill was intended by this, as Nikki clarifies, speaking to the way she, her mother, and her grandmother were all raised. Nevertheless, “I went from a family that expected that of me to an industry that expected that of me. I never in my life had this chance to kinda be like, ‘Who am I? Like really and truly, Who

am I outside of this industry? Who am I as a person outside of my family?’”

“Jen [Dede] kinda walked into my life at that point in time where I was like, ‘I want to wake up and I want to be the most authentic version of myself. And I don’t care if it’s messy and I don’t care if it’s ugly. And I don’t care if my messiness makes people uncomfortable.’ This is important. This is important to living a good life.” From this revelation, Nikki and Jen co-founded What We Are—what started as a hobby blog has now turned into a platform and a movement for women about women.

A spokesperson for the Alzheimer’s Association (in honor of her father, who is living with a rare form of dementia called Pick’s disease), Nikki also passionately supports Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA), which provided life-saving care for her son, Bennett—in fact, Nikki and her family now “adopt a family” at CHLA each Christmas, which helps support the most vulnerable and financially challenged patients and their families.

We’ve seen Nikki’s characters in several TV Christmases now, but what does Christmas actually look like in the DeLoach-Goodell household? “It really and truly looks very similar to a Hallmark movie!” To start, the family picks out a real tree at the lot. “I actually am a fan of having really personalized ornaments on your tree.” She has collected ornaments from all her travels, and puts up those from her kids and her own childhood, too. Matching pajamas on Christmas Eve and morning are a must. Nikki even commits to wearing an ugly sweater almost every day in December! But spending Christmas Eve with extended family in Georgia is her favorite part of the holiday.

Nikki can next be seen in Hallmark’s upcoming Christmas movie *Two Turtle Doves*, opposite Michael Rady. The movie premieres on November 1st on Hallmark Movies & Mysteries. Though Nikki would love to eventually work her way into the director’s chair, starring in this latest Christmas movie was a nice break in the action. “It was actually kind of a pleasure just to be responsible for my lines and show up on set,” and working with a team that she has nothing but praise for made the experience even more pleasurable—they did “the job that I would have done had I produced it.”

“Sometimes you don’t produce and you watch. You should always be watching, you should always be observing, because we are never not learning,” says Nikki, and one can’t help but agree. “It doesn’t matter how many times you’ve done something. If you are in a place where you’re like, ‘I have nothing left to learn,’ then you should probably quit and go do something else.”

No matter where one is in life or how perfect something may seem, it’s difficult to argue with that ideal—it is in the pursuit of perfection that perfectly imperfect is conceived. Nikki DeLoach is the essence of just that.



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NIKKI DeLOACH

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HALLMARK HALL OF FAME
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LOVE TAKES FLIGHT

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HALLMARK CHANNEL



5 QUESTIONS
WITH
"THE ORVILLE'S"
**SCOTT
GRIMES**

on the cover

LOVE TAKES FLIGHT

Hallmark Hall Of Fame Movie Is A Soaring Tale About Letting Go.

By Kellie Freeze



The 263rd installment of the Hallmark Hall of Fame franchise takes off on Saturday with the premiere of the Hallmark Channel film *Love Takes Flight*. *TV Weekly* spoke with actress Nikki DeLoach, who stars in the film alongside Jeff Hephner, Barbara Niven, Tom Thon and adorable newcomer Skylar Olivia Flanagan.

"I am so honored, I am so thrilled, I am so moved to be a part of a Hallmark Hall of Fame movie," says DeLoach.

In the film, DeLoach plays Dr. Lizzie Beauman, a single mother and doctor turned hospital administrator who cares for her patients with almost as much devotion as she lavishes on her 5-year-old daughter (Flanagan), who suffers from an insulin disorder. Lizzie knows firsthand the struggles facing the families of patients, so she works tirelessly to transform her hospital into a world-class treatment center. But the stress of parenthood and her job leads her to micromanage every aspect of her life into a joyless routine. "Work is work, personal is personal, and the two do not mix," explains DeLoach. "She's just a mother who's trying to manage it all. She's trying to be all things to all people, and the last thing on her list is happiness and love for herself — like many of us mommies."

Lizzie's dependence on order is threatened by the arrival of newly hired EMS pilot Charley Allen (Hephner), who challenges her to open her heart and face her fears, particularly her fear of flying. In return, Lizzie helps Charley repair his tumultuous relationship with his father (Thon), as both men have struggled after the death of Charley's mother.

Lizzie's fear of flying is a succinct analogy for why she lives an order-filled life: When you fly in an airplane, your life is in the hands of someone else. They're literally piloting your fate. And flying — like love and friendship — requires reliance on someone else. "I think that is a big thing for Lizzie," explains DeLoach, "wanting to have control over everything that is happening. But that's just not the way life is. We don't always have the answers. It's not always black and white. It sometimes is gray, and we

sometimes have to have faith in the fog that it's all gonna be OK."

DeLoach shares that this same faith guides her in her own life: In 2017, her youngest son Bennett was born with multiple heart defects and had his first open-heart surgery at just 5 days old. "When you go into a real life-or-death situation, you realize just how little control you have over anything. And that's when you really have to dig deep and have the courage to open up and allow yourself to have faith." Today, Bennett is a busy toddler, and DeLoach is grateful for his health and her confidence in facing life's obstacles.

Love Takes Flight also finds inspiration in the real-life, headline-making and life-affirming friendship of a young girl and an elderly man who met in a grocery store aisle. When the preschooler asked the stranger for a birthday hug, they forged a deep bond that pulled the widower from the depths of despair and gave his life renewed purpose. "It's such a beautiful story about finding something to keep you going and understanding that you can create purpose out of your pain," says DeLoach. "This little girl really gives him a new lease on life and inspires him to give him something to live for."

And while Hallmark movies are best known for their heartfelt storylines and romantic moments, they often have wonderful injections of levity. DeLoach shares a behind-the-scenes and unfortunately timed mishap that occurred while shooting the film's romantic climax. "It was this beautiful house we were filming at — right off the water — and the sun is setting. It's just absolutely gorgeous. There are these beautiful trees with Spanish moss hanging everywhere ... and this deluge of sand gnats," she recalls with a giggle. "At one point in time, [Hephner] went in to kiss me for that finale moment and literally pulled away. And he was like, 'You have sand gnats in your mouth.'" DeLoach's mirth turns into an all-out laugh as she says, "So just when you see that finale scene, and you see how beautiful it is and the emotion and all of that, just know that there are a million sand gnats around us!"

EXPOSE

HAS THERE EVER BEEN A SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE? THE REAL
REASON THE COUNTRY OF BRAZIL IS BURNING, LITERALLY!

NEXT BIG THING

ISSUE #33

76th
Venice Int'l
Film Festival

PLUS

72nd
Festival de
Cannes

PLUS

2019
Toronto Int'l
Film Festival

PHOTOS INSIDE

FESTIVAL SEASON

Nikki DeLoach

EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATION WITH NEXT BIG THING
ABOUT FAMILY, UPCOMING U.S. ELECTIONS,
INCLUSION & REPRESENTATION IN CINEMA,
AND THE THINGS THAT REALLY MATTER TO HER.

PLUS WHAT SHE DOESN'T WANT TO DO WHEN
SHE'S A 100 YEARS OLD.

71st
EMMY
Awards

73rd
TONY
Awards

PLUS

'A KIN OF ITS OWN SKIN' BOUND BY
TRAFFICKING

COVER
STORY



COVER
STORY

PHOTOGRAPHS
INDA REID OF
IMAGES BY INDA



SWEET HOME

EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATION
WITH NIKKI DELOACH

"I WAS A FREE RANGE CHILD. IT WAS SUCH A SMALL TOWN THAT EVERYONE KNEW EACH OTHER. YOU WERE RAISED BY A COMMUNITY, AND I BELIEVE THAT TAUGHT ME HOW TO LOVE A LOT OF PEOPLE AND ALSO RECEIVE LOVE FROM A LOT OF PEOPLE..."

- Nikki

NBT: YOU GREW UP IN BLACKSHEAR, GEORGIA AS THE DAUGHTER OF AN EDUCATOR AND BUSINESS MAN ALONGSIDE YOUR SIBLINGS. PAINT FOR ME A PICTURE OF YOUR LIFE AS A YOUNG NIKKI.

NIKKI: I was a free range child. It was such a small town that everyone knew each other. You were raised by a community, and I believe that taught me how to love a lot of people and also receive love from a lot of people. I don't know if the childhood I had could exist anywhere today, which breaks my heart. All kids should have the experience of roaming the world and letting curiosity guide your adventure. But, the world is a little too scary right now. Half the time I found my own way home after school or basketball practice. I stayed outside playing until it was dark. I went to church every Sunday. My brother was eleven years younger so he didn't come along until a year before I left home to do The Mickey Mouse Club. I had my sister who was my partner in crime and the best sister a gal could ever have. We did everything together. I miss so deeply being with her every day. But, I had the best life growing up in Blackshear, Georgia. That town and everyone in it have a very special place in my heart. Always.

NBT: YOU SHARED A STORY OF BEING A CHILD GOING FOR AUDITIONS WHERE THEY HAD A BOARD WITH NAMES OF TALENT THAT HAD BOOKED A ROLE AND IT CREATED A VERY COMPETITIVE, UNEVEN PLAYING FIELD. AS A CHILD EXPERIENCING THAT FIRST HAND, HOW DID THAT CHANGE YOUR OUTLOOK ON THE THING YOU LOVED TO DO – ENTERTAIN AND PERFORM? DID IT CREATE IN YOU A CYNICAL OUTLOOK ON LIFE?

NIKKI: It was very competitive but that didn't scare me. I was the child that loved an opportunity to rise to the occasion. It fueled me to know I had competition. I was never in competition with others, only myself. I was lucky enough to play sports growing up, so I spent a lot of time playing on a team. I think team sports are critical for girls. To this day, I love playing on a team. I love collaborating. But it also taught me that your only competition is you. The cynicism didn't really begin to surface until much later in my career. You know, acting is one of very few career paths where it doesn't matter how many years you've been working or how many credits you have, they can still send you back to the very beginning and ask you to start all over. It's disrespectful and unfair. No one would ever tell a Judge - after going to law

school, being a prosecutor, working his/her way up the ladder, putting the 50,000 hours in, and finally becoming a judge - that after all of that they have to start all over and go back to law school and do it all over again. I am not comparing what I do to the importance of a judge. Let me be clear. It's just an example. But, it is asked of actors everyday. I've had to start my career over so many times at this point. You really have to love it to keep going. I love the art, the work. The business of it is truly deplorable sometimes.

NBT: ACTORS ON THE SMALL SCREEN AND BIG SCREEN PLAY A ROLE BECAUSE IT'S THEIR PROFESSION EVEN THOUGH SOME ROLES MAY REQUIRE THEM TO PLAY ROLES THAT HAVE NO CONNECTION TO THEIR LIFE OFF SCREEN. FOR INSTANCE, YOU SAID "I UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS TO BE IN FRONT OF A CAMERA; I DON'T WANT TO EVER BE MYSELF IN FRONT OF IT. I HAVE TO TRANSFORM INTO THIS PERSON..." MY QUESTION IS: DO YOU THINK THAT THE FOURTH WALL OF CINEMA (ACTING AS A PROFESSION) IN THE U.S. IS BEING DESTROYED WHEN CONTROVERSIES AND BACKLASH ARE CREATED WHEN ACTORS DON'T 'PLAY' THE ROLE OF REALITY?

NIKKI: This is a time in our industry of great change and I believe we all have an opportunity to learn and grow through it. I have a commitment to gender parity in the industry. I have been fighting alongside many others for women to get the same opportunities as men. I can't stand behind that without standing behind the inclusion of other oppressed groups. As much as artists would love to be able to play anything, until there is inclusion, commitments have to be made. I don't think that anything is being destroyed, I think we are growing and it's a great thing.

NBT: TO PIGGY BACK OFF THE LAST QUESTION, LAST YEAR SCARLET JOHANSSON WAS SUPPOSED TO PLAY AN ACTUAL TRANS MAN, DANTE 'TEX' GILL IN RUB & TUG BUT SHE DROPPED OUT DUE TO CONTROVERSY OVER HER BEING CASTED FOR THE ROLE. WE'VE SEEN ACTORS LIKE TARON EGERTON PLAY AN OPEN GAY MAN, ELTON JOHN IN ROCKETMAN, BUT EGERTON IS NOT GAY. IN YOUR OPINION DO YOU THINK THAT THE CRAFT OF ACTING IS BEING LOST BECAUSE SOMETIMES WE DON'T GET TO SEE ACTORS PULL OF AMAZING PERFORMANCES BY BRINGING CHARACTERS TO LIFE ON SCREEN?

NIKKI: Scarlet is a great actress. Taron was incredible in that role. However, that's not the point. Of course, there are very talented actors who could bring to life any role or character. The point is that we make a commitment to fighting for trans and gay actors to obtain those roles. Just as women in the industry have been fighting for a place at the table, we have to fight for others who have also been oppressed to have their seat at that table. Inclusion enriches our storytelling, and representation is important for all of us. This is an opportunity for us to reflect on what is gained from progress, and that's an important distinction from seeing it as what is being "lost." Honestly, I am so excited that you are asking these questions because it is bringing to the forefront that the subject of inclusion is important.

NBT: YOU MUST HAVE STORIES TO TELL ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE OF YOUR MUSIC CAREER, TOURING EUROPE AND PLAYING LIVE AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN AS PART OF THE GIRL GROUP, *INNOSENSE*. BUT YOU BECAME A VICTIM OF DOUBLE DIPPING AND TRIPLE DIPPING CARRIED OUT BY LOU PEARLMAN. HOW DID THAT EXPERIENCE AFFECT OR CHANGE YOU?

NIKKI: Touring the world and having the opportunity to play Madison Square Garden is a gift I will always be grateful for. But Lou Pearlman didn't just take advantage of me financially, he violated me as a human being. My friend Lance Bass who was in *NSYNC produced a fantastic documentary about Lou. I would recommend that everyone watch it. It's very real, very honest. My experience in the music business changed me forever because it showed me what people are capable of. The good thing it taught me was to trust my gut, not just about situations but also about people. My instincts have always been right. It's when I've gone against them that I've gotten myself in a pickle. I've learned to surround myself with people I trust. Right now, that's my entertainment attorney (aka My Husband). My husband went through the same thing with Lou. After it ended, he went to law school. He wanted to protect others from being taken advantage of. The problem is that there is often a lack of moral integrity in this industry. People's words don't align with their actions. Some people are willing to do whatever it takes to get ahead. For me, it's just not that important for me to "make it" if I have to betray others to get there or go against my moral integrity. You have to be very

careful who you align yourself with in business. That was one of the greatest lessons of the music business. It also taught me to be even more fierce with my integrity, grace, and thoughtfulness. I am a big believer in BEING that thing you would like to see shifted in others. BE the change. BE the good.

NBT: SEEING HOW THE MUSIC INDUSTRY HAS EVOLVED A LOT FROM CASSETTE TAPES, TO CDS TO MP3 AND NOW STREAMING. FROM THE WAY ARTISTS WERE MANAGED TO THE WAY DEALS WERE MADE BACK THEN, COMPARED TO THE WAY THE INDUSTRY IS NOW. BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE BACK THEN VERSUS TODAY, DO YOU THINK THE UNDERLYING FRAMEWORK OF THE INDUSTRY HAS CHANGED?

NIKKI: I haven't been in the music industry for quite some time, however, I know from my friends who are still in the industry that it has changed dramatically. I think the underlying framework for almost all entertainment industries has shifted. The way people consume their entertainment has shifted a great deal. So, you either change with the times or get left behind. I miss the way music used to be consumed. I miss going to stores and buying a CD. I also love that I don't have to travel with a binder of all my favorite albums. Instead, I can stream it from one device. It's much more efficient and environmentally friendly. The one thing that I hope never changes is the public's desire to attend live shows.

NBT: GROWING UP IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY MADE YOU A CHILD STAR. MOST TESTIMONIES WE HEAR ABOUT CHILD STARS BY THE TIME THEY GET TO ADULthood, THE OUTCOMES ARE NOT USUALLY POSITIVE BUT YOUR STORY IS QUITE DIFFERENT. YOU SHARED THAT THE REASON YOU DIDN'T END UP LIKE MOST CHILD STARS IS BECAUSE OF FAILURE; IT HUMBLed YOU. MY QUESTION IS, HOW DOES SOMEONE CONSCIOUSLY RE-EXAMINE THEIR LIFE AND WHAT'S ACTUALLY IMPORTANT?

NIKKI: Your questions are so insightful! I love it. That's actually a really great question. It starts with acknowledging that something in you or your life doesn't feel aligned with who you are. You know when something feels off inside of you. You start thinking, "Why am I not happy? Why don't I feel fulfilled? Why am I being self-destructive? What actually matters most in life? This doesn't feel good. This doesn't feel right." I have always been a

person who goes after something with everything I've got. That includes my well-being and happiness. I'll be damned if I look back at my life when I am 100 years old and see that I spent the majority of my life unsatisfied, unhappy, or unaware. Luckily, I was smart enough to choose some very good people to hang on to who really helped me figure these things out. I had some amazing teachers.

NBT: AFTER YOU LEFT THE MUSIC BUSINESS, YOU WENT TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND LIVED OUT THE REST OF YOUR RECORD CONTRACT. HOW DOES A PERSON WHO COMES FROM A WELL-KNIT FAMILY COME BACK FROM SUCH A CAREER ALTERING EXPERIENCE LIKE WHAT HAPPENED WITH LOU PEARLMAN? SUCH EVENTS OFTEN PARALYZE PEOPLE'S THINKING FOR LIFE; HOW DID YOU COME OUT FROM ALL THAT?

NIKKI: It was tough. It was really tough actually. I was completely disillusioned, betrayed, and I carried a deep creative wound. The smartest thing I ever did for my career was take a big step back, go to college, and surround myself with people who were interested and focused on everything that was not the entertainment industry. I became very politically and socially involved. When I would volunteer in low income communities it became very clear that even though I had suffered something very painful, I was much better off than so many. After the music business, I was left with very little financially. But, I did have a roof over my head and clothes on my back. I had people I could turn to for help. I started asking myself, "How can I be of service in this world?" It really made me see that there is more to life than obtaining my dream of being an artist. Is that important? Absolutely. Dreams and desire and passion. Those are all very important things. But our purpose here in this world is much deeper. I thank God everything fell apart in my life because of the music business because that's when I started to figure that out.

NBT: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY HAS BEEN A VITAL PART OF CORPORATIONS. SOME KEEP TO THEIR WORD BY DOING EXACTLY WHAT THEY [CORPORATIONS] SAY IN THEIR CSR. YOU OFTEN SAY THAT HALLMARK IS A GREAT COMPANY TO WORK FOR AND HOW THEY HELPED YOU WHEN YOU WERE PREGNANT WITH YOUR SON WHO WAS BORN WITH HEART DEFECTS. WHY DO YOU THINK HALLMARK CHOSE TO MAKE SUCH A MOVE?

NIKKI: Because when they say they are about family, they mean it. When you work in the Hallmark world, you become a part of their family. They really care about you. I will be forever grateful to them for how they've supported my family through these last few years.

NBT: I WATCHED YOUR WALK TO END ALZHEIMERS' PSA VIDEO, HOW DID YOU GATHER COURAGE AND STRENGTH TO PUT TOGETHER THOSE WORDS IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT KNOWING THAT IT WAS AFFECTING YOUR FAMILY SO CLOSE TO HOME? WE TEND TO EXPRESS OURSELVES FREELY WHEN EVENTS ARE DISTANT FROM US; WE TEND TO LOOK WITHIN OURSELVES TO PULL OUT EMPATHY FOR OTHERS. BUT WHEN IT'S CLOSE TO HOME, IT'S DIFFERENT. HOW DID YOU FIND STRENGTH AND COURAGE FOR THAT?

NIKKI: Thank you so much for taking the time to watch my video and thank you for your kind words. I did it for my dad, my papa (grandfather), and the millions of others who have been affected by this horrible disease. I vowed to my papa and dad that I would fight for them the way they've fought for me my entire life. And anything worth having is worth being vulnerable for. Vulnerability is our superpower.

NBT: GOING THROUGH OUR RESEARCH, I FOUND THAT YOU ARE VERY MULTI-FACETED. YOU GET INVOLVED IN A LOT OF AREAS THAT DIRECTLY AFFECT HUMANITY: POLITICAL CONVERSATIONS, SPORTS CONVERSATIONS AND CONVERSATIONS ABOUT HEALTH. WHAT'S YOUR VIEW ON THE CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL STATE?

NIKKI: How much time do you have? I think the United States is in a very dangerous state, and we all need to be awake, alert and ready to take action. People are hurting. People are struggling. And no one in our current administration is listening because they don't care. They care about status, maintaining their political power and money. When we stop caring about humanity, when we've ceased to lead from a place of compassion and gratitude, then we are in a very dangerous place. I am hoping this election turns this train around. If not, I am very scared for what the future may bring.

NBT: LOOKING WITHIN THE U.S. AND THE CURRENT LINEUP OF CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR PRESIDENCY, WHO DO YOU THINK HAS THE BEST CHANCE TO BE ELECTED? WHY?

NIKKI: I haven't decided yet. I think we have some excellent candidates. I love Elizabeth Warren and have for many years. She's smart, fierce, charming, compassionate, and she's leading on policy. Sanders is a force. I think either of them would command a debate stage. Joe Biden is the front runner right now. And there are so many things that are great about him. However, I am not sure he really wants it or if he stepped forward because he loves our country and knows he is one of our best shots. I love Beto and Pete! Honestly, I think we have some of the best and brightest on that stage.

“...WHEN WE STOP CARING ABOUT HUMANITY, WHEN WE’VE CEASED
TO LEAD FROM A PLACE OF COMPASSION AND GRATITUDE, THEN
WE ARE IN A VERY DANGEROUS PLACE. I AM HOPING THIS ELECTION
TURNS THIS TRAIN AROUND. IF NOT, I AM VERY SCARED FOR WHAT
THE FUTURE MAY BRING...”

NBT: YOU FOUNDED THE ‘WHAT WE ARE’ BLOG COMMUNITY, WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL VISION FOR THE SITE?

NIKKI: Jen and I want to give women a stage to get messy, be the authentic versions of themselves, and get vulnerable and open. That's always been the vision.

NBT: YOU MADE A STATEMENT THAT I THINK WAS PROFOUND, “WHEN YOU THINK THERE’S A GOD AND HE’S IN CONTROL OF OUR LIVES, THEREFORE WE DON’T HAVE TO ASK THE ‘WHYS’ OR STRESS ABOUT, ‘WHAT IF I DID THIS? IS THIS GOING TO HAPPEN WITH MY CAREER?’ WE ARE IN CONSTANT ANXIETY AND FEAR. BUT IF YOU ARE IN A CONSTANT STATE OF SURRENDER, STRESS DOESN’T EXIST.” HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE OR EXPLAIN YOUR SPIRITUAL STATE?

NIKKI: I am still in surrender... a constant state of surrender. Thank you so much for these incredible questions. It's an honor and a privilege to have these conversations.

YV

MAGAZINE

WHERE YOUR VOICE MATTERS

ACTRESS
KAREN STRASSMAN

KATY DAVIS

MOLLEE GRAY

ABBYGALE CHUNG

BRUCE MCNAIR

ACTRESS

NIKKI DELOACH

NOV-DEC 2019

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

WORLD AIDS
AWARENESS DAY

NATIONAL DIABETES
AWARENESS MONTH





NIKKI DELOACH

YV: Tell us about your first role on the Hallmark network. Now as one of Hallmark's leading actress, what are some of the movies coming out this year that we can see you in?

Nikki: My first role on Hallmark was a movie called *Christmas Land*. To this day, it is one of my favorite experiences. I loved our producers and director so much. It makes such a difference in the ease and joy of the experience when those positions are filled with people who are wonderful. We filmed in Utah. It was gorgeous. I had two movies air earlier this year: *Love to the Rescue* and *Love Takes Flight*. For this upcoming holiday season, I did a movie called *Two Turtle Doves*. I was reunited with Michael Rady and Michaela Russell which was a dream. I cannot even begin to express how deep my affection goes for both of them. One of the greatest gifts of this movie was working with director, Lesley Demetriades. This was her first time directing for Hallmark but the third movie we did this year together. I just love her, and she's a terrific director. The movie will air November 1st on Hallmark Movies and Mysteries.

YV: How did you begin your acting career? What inspired you to become an actress? Is there a role that you want that you haven't portrayed yet?

Nikki: I fell in love with movies at such a young age. I knew I wanted to be a storyteller since the age of three. I made it a profession by 7 years old. I watched movies all the time with my nana. It was our thing. On the nights I would stay with her (which were a lot), we would go to the video store and rent several movies, go home, and settle in. She would often make me French toast or peanut butter toast, or cheese toast. I am a big fan of anything that involves bread and butter. I was inspired by those evenings, sitting with my nana and being transported to another world. When I saw *'Singing in the Rain'* the first time, I thought my body was going to explode. Barbara Streisand in *Funny Girl* was a revelation. I wanted to make someone feel the way those characters and the stories they told made me feel. There are so many roles I haven't had the opportunity to play yet that would definitely be a dream. My new thing is playing a medical professional on TV. After going through what we have with my youngest son, I am obsessed with nurses, doctors, and surgeons. I just think what they do is incredible.

YV: You are co-founder of "What We Are", can you tell us about it? What is the mission statement?

Nikki: "What We Are" was founded by myself and Jen Dede Kelly, one of my dearest friends several years ago because we had learned a few things and wanted to share that with others. The first thing was that vulnerability was your superpower. We had learned that living an authentic life was dependent on your ability to get vulnerable and open. We also learned that you don't have to go through pain or messiness or heartbreak in isolation. As women, we often go away and clean everything up, put everything back together again so that we can face the world with a smile. It's unfair and unhealthy. Finally, we wanted to lift up all the women we knew - all incredible ladies with beautiful, important stories to tell.

YV: Besides acting, you are a supporter and spokesperson for The Alzheimer's Association and work with Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Can you tell us what lead you to take on this role?

Nikki: My personal experience. In the summer of 2017, I was pregnant with my second child, and I found out he had multiple heart defects. Five days later, I found out that my dad had Pick's Disease, a rare and aggressive form of dementia. My life as I knew it was forever changed. Now, at the time, I didn't know just how profound that change was going to be. All I could feel was paralyzing

fear and deep sadness and pain. I made a choice inside of that fear and pain to move through this whole gut-wrenching, earth shaking experience with openness and vulnerability. I was not going to run away from it or escape it. I gave myself permission to feel every ounce of it. And something pretty wonderful happened...I found magic and miracles throughout. With an open heart, you see everything for what it is. What I knew to be true in my heart was that Children's Hospital of Los Angeles was going to save my child's life. And they did. I watched them do it. Not once, but three times. I've seen the lengths that they will go to save the life of a child. It's the most inspirational thing to stand inside of. I also know that millions of children are dependent on the life-saving services provided by Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, and I wanted to work side by side with them to make sure we protect that always. I found the same kind of magic with The Alzheimer's Association - a group of people who have completely dedicated themselves to finding a cure for this horrible disease. Getting involved is the best way to turn your pain into purpose. My dad would have never given up on me, and I will not give up on him.

YV: How does it feel to transition from actress to executive producer?

Nikki: I love it. It feels fulfilling. I have always wanted to produce. When I was on sets as a child, I would ask how I could become the industry's youngest producer. Of course, that did not happen. Everything has its perfect timing. I love being able to take the seed of an idea, develop it into a story, and then bring that story to life. It's just the coolest process ever!

YV: Are you currently working on any projects? What can we expect to see from you in 2020?

Nikki: I am currently developing and writing. I will probably get back on set toward the end of next year for projects that will come out in 2020.

YV: We learned a lot about your career but how about your personal life. Do you like to cook? What is your favorite thing to eat? What do you like to do for fun? Do you like to travel? And favorite movie of all time?

Nikki: I love to cook when I can do it with ease. That has not been the case in the last two years. Now, I am trying to cook with one starving kid on my hip and the other starving kid hanging on my leg. And while I love my kids more than anything else in this world, they make it difficult to get a meal cooked in a relaxing, non-chaotic environment. I love sushi. I could eat it every day. For fun, I love hanging out with my girlfriends. It doesn't matter what we do, I just love time with them. I love going to the Farmer's Market with my kids and husband. I love to workout. I love going to baseball and football games. I love traveling. There hasn't been much time for vacations, but my husband and I just went on our first in seven years and it was so fun! There is no way I could pick a favorite movie. Not a chance...but two of my all-time favorites I mentioned above.

YV: How can we find you on social media?

Nikki: On Instagram, I am @nikdeloach. On Twitter, I am @nikkideloach. On Facebook, it's my name.

Photo Credits (with Instagram handles):

Photographer: Inda Reid of Images by Inda @imagesbyinda

Hair: Kyle Hennessy @kylehennessyhair

Makeup: Ashley Beverly Cordova @ashleybeverly

Blazer: Silk Laundry courtesy of Michele Marie PR



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NIKKI DELOACH

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"SO MANY FACTORS HAVE TO COME TOGETHER TO CREATE A GREAT SHOW."

—NIKKI DELOACH

Lacey Hamilton who is played by the talented Nikki DeLoach. Despite being one of the hottest TV moms ever, Lacey is known for her sometimes less-than-stellar parenting choices. Essentially, she is clueless about child-raising. Still, as DeLoach reminds us, she is growing and learning just like any young parent does, and it's that growth and increasing maturity that deserves a little credit.

So we know the gist of Lacey's character, but what about the actress who plays her? Well, we can probably agree that Nikki DeLoach certainly wouldn't write her kid an anonymous letter saying, "You could disappear and no one would notice" (oh, Lacey). As it turns out, DeLoach is a woman who sees the good in every situation—including when it comes to her character's flaws. While DeLoach is clearly a more skillful mom, she sees the positives in Lacey's parenting: the strength, the communication, and especially the love and good intention. As a fairly new mom herself, she internalizes these qualities, as they are noble ones that every parent (and person, for that matter) should possess. She is nothing if not genuine, and has a clear passion for life—for her son, for her successful career, for her cast mates, and yes, for her kooky character, Lacey. *AWKWARD* has made a significant, wonderful impact in Nikki DeLoach's life, and Lacey Hamilton has left her mark as well. **BY JENNIFER CASTRO**

MTV's critically-acclaimed series, *AWKWARD*, returns to the air on April 15th, 2014. For those who've been living under a rock and haven't heard of the show, it's a comedy-drama with an impressive blend of (you guessed it) awkward scenarios that accompany

those humiliating teenage years with crucial life lessons that we can all learn from. Praised for its witty writing and undeniable realism, *AWKWARD* has earned well-deserved recognition from fans and critics alike, including a People's Choice Award, a Teen Choice Award, and numerous other nominations. Part of the show's success is thanks to its brilliant characters, particularly one hysterical



"[BEING A
MOTHER IS] THE
GREATEST THING
THAT HAS EVER
HAPPENED
TO ME."

-NIKKI DELOACH

Cliche: Congratulations on the upcoming season four of *AWKWARD*! Did you think the show had this much staying power when you first took the role of Lacey Hamilton?

Nikki DeLoach: I definitely knew that we had something special with *AWKWARD*. I also felt like we had staying power. However, I had no expectations, because you just never know how something will be received. So many factors have to come together to create a great show. Then, you have to get people to tune in every week. The stars have to align, and I am so grateful that they aligned for us on *AWKWARD*.

In the last episode, we see Lacey and Jenna have a real mother/daughter moment—probably one of the most important ones in the history of the show since it relates back to the “carefrontation” letter in the pilot. Do you think moments like those make up for Lacey’s not-so-great parenting? Despite the fact that *AWKWARD* is a comedy, we have always sought to present an authentic mother/daughter journey. That means showing the pain that mothers can sometimes unknowingly cause their daughters, as well as the heartbreak that daughters can sometimes cause their mothers. We have also shown how a mother and daughter can find their way to forgiveness. Those moments that Jenna and Lacey share not only grow their relationship together, but grow them both as individuals, and I absolutely believe they make up for Lacey’s past mistakes.

How are you enjoying being a fairly new mother yourself? Do you have any favorite moments of your own? It’s the greatest thing that has ever happened to me. I would love to say, “Every moment is my favorite moment,” but I would be a liar. When [my son] was crying non-stop for almost six weeks straight, those moments were really tough. I love when he smiles; it is pure joy and lights up every room. I love watching him discover the world. For

me, it’s like re-discovering the world through fresh, innocent eyes.

Do you think any of Lacey’s parenting skills (or lack thereof) will be useful for when your son becomes a teenager? I do feel like Lacey’s parenting skills will be useful because she is very communicative with her daughter, which I feel is important. She tries her best and is very well-intentioned. Kids can sense that. Also, she has the strength to discipline when need be, as we learned in season three. I feel like that is one of the more essential characteristics of a good parent. If you don’t teach a child how to be disciplined, they won’t possess it later in life.

One of the show’s early driving forces is that infamous “carefrontation” letter, written by Lacey. It completely alters Jenna’s opinion of herself and perhaps her entire high school experience to date. What was Lacey’s intention there?

It was Lacey’s intention that the letter alter Jenna’s opinion of herself and her high school experience, but in a positive way. Lacey thought that she was helping Jenna by suggesting that she take those actions. She had no idea that it would backfire the way it did. Lacey thought that she would help Jenna to be more outgoing, confident, and up level her whole high school experience. Lacey always has the best of intentions, but her execution of things is often flawed. I like to say that she has a very inadequate skill set; however, that skill set has definitely improved over the years.

How do you think you would’ve reacted if you were in Jenna’s shoes?

I know how I would have reacted, because I have been in that situation with my own mother. Most daughters have! That’s why the story is so relatable. Every mother has done something that they thought would help their daughter, but in the end, it hurt them. As a kid, you feel like something must be really broken about you if your own mother doesn’t

love and accept you for who you are. As a mother, you think you are helping.

Jenna and her friends really have it rough! Was your high school experience ever as dramatic and intense as what these teens have been experiencing? I didn’t go to a regular high school. I was working; therefore, I was tutored on each set. I also finished high school in two years. There’s very little drama when it’s just you, your school books, and a teacher.

Lucky you! How do you think you would’ve fared in the high school environment created by *AWKWARD*?

Let’s just say I probably would have spent a lot of time in Valerie’s office. Of course, I would’ve been in love with Marty, too. Who isn’t?

Being a small-town girl, what prompted your big Hollywood dreams?

My parents always said that I came into this world already knowing what I wanted to do with my life. I started performing at 3 years old. I think it was just part of my life-curriculum to be creative and pursue my dreams in this industry. There were definitely certain movies and performances that inspired me. *Funny Girl* is one of my favorite movies of all time, and Barbara Streisand’s performance is perfect. I have always been obsessed with movies and music. As a kid, I would write out all of the dialogue of a movie and force my sister to act out every scene with me. I was a real nuisance.

What would you say has been the highlight of your career so far?

First of all, every job, and every person, has left an imprint on my career and who I am as a person. However, there are a few highlights that stand out. One is the *Mickey Mouse Club*. I was able to sing, dance, and act (both comedy and drama) with twenty other kids who shared the same interests as I did.



What a dream job for a kid! *AWKWARD* has been a huge highlight in my career as well. It has made me grow as an actor and as a human being. We are a real family on the show. I get to work with people I love, with a character I adore, and with writing that leaves me inspired and challenged on a weekly basis. It's been such a gift!

What kind of roles do you look forward to getting in the future? Anything you've been dying to try?
There are so many roles that I am dying to do, like a movie musical or Holly Hunter's role in *Broadcast News*. I mostly want to continue to push myself as an actor in both comedy and drama. If I read something and it scares me a little or a lot, I want to run towards that. I want to build relationships with other creatives and have a great time working together. I am really just open to anything and everything that inspires and scares me.

***AWKWARD* does a fantastic job of blending unconventional humor with important life lessons. What do you think is most important to take away from the show?**
This show is so incredible because it touches upon all that young women and men experience in high school. From bullying to sex, body image to mother/daughter troubles, *AWKWARD* moves through these issues with heart and humor. I loved the ending of season three, where Jenna realizes that she doesn't need a guy to dance with her at the prom; she can be happy dancing all by herself. Jenna has learned that she must love herself first. She no longer needs a guy to define her self-worth or validate her. It's such an important life lesson.

The highly anticipated season four premieres on April 15th at 10pm/9c! What are you allowed to tell us about it?
Nothing. Absolutely nothing!



Red gown: PUA GLADYS PEREY; Shoes: ORY CYMAZIC; Braided necklace and bracelets: DARRID JAMIN

"I want to build relationships with other creatives and have a great time working together."

—NIKKI DELOACH

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BY NICKI DELOACH

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The *Awkward* mom states she is anything but—when it comes to loving son, Hudson. The former *Mouseketeer* on overcoming career struggles, and being grateful for the hard climb

NIKKI DELOACH



The Southerner, former *Mouseketeer* and girl band member, and MTV top-rating show co-star is most excited for her role of a lifetime: mother to Hudson. Nikki Deloach is feeling everything but 'awkward' when it comes to raising and caring for her adorable, blond and blue-eyed darling

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM AND SYLVIA
WENDERSHOFF
INTERVIEW BY KARIZ TANYA PAVIS
MAKEUP BY AKEMI YAGI
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Nikki: Trench top by **KAREN KANE**, karenkane.com • Jeans by **LEVI STRAUSS**, levi Strauss.com • Shoes by **CHELSEA PARIS**, chelseaparis.com • Necklace by **LEENABELL**, leenabell.com • **Hudson:** Onesie by **PAIGE LAUREN BABY**, paigelaurenbaby.com • Hat (on the cover) by **FORE!! AXEL AND HUDSON**, foreaxelandhudson.com





It's hard to ignore Nikki DeLoach as her character "Lacey" in MTV's phenomenal teen dramedy, *Awkward*, not just because of the miracles brought on by her amazing push-up bras on the show, but more so because of her spot-on acting. Nikki plays a young mother to an only child on the show—she was a former popular girl who got pregnant in high school by

the man she later on married. In the first season of the show, much is played up on the relationship of her character and of the lead's (her daughter), Jenna (actress Ashley Rickards), because she wrote a horrible, anonymous note of advice from 'a friend' to her daughter about the latter's seeming insignificance—the message may be summed up to one of the letter's lines: "As you are now, you could disappear

and no one would notice." Their dynamic tugs on the heartstrings of many well-intentioned parents who tend to do more damage than good, unknowingly. We ask Nikki about how she's similar to her character, how it was like feeling overtaken by her former *Mouseketeers*, leaving home at 12, being like a sister to Justin Timberlake, meeting husband, Ryan, and being mom to gorgeous little Hudson.



Kariz: You are great on the show, I just have to say. You made me believe that you are actually Lacey.

Nikki: That means so much to me! Thank you so much.

K: Absolutely great. So how was it like growing up in Georgia? I heard you are the eldest of three.

N: Yes, I am the eldest of three, and my sister and I were about 3 and 1/2 years apart, so it was really nice because I had a friend for life. I really couldn't have asked for a better upbringing. We live on a farm and there's so much space, and you could be out 'til dark and our parents didn't have to worry. All the kids around you could play with, and we'd play basketball everyday. I have a son now and he's 7 months old, and I yearn to be able to give him something similar to what I had, but I don't know if I can do that in Los Angeles.

K: You had the whole shebang, farm animals, everything? I love that.

N: Yeah, I rode horses. In the summers,

we'd pick corn, green beans, and grow all of our vegetables for the year. All of our meat came from our animals on the farm.

K: You were organic from the get-go. How were your parents like?

N: I was organic from the start. My mother was a teacher but she also was a domestic instructor, a cheerleader sponsor. She always had a million balls in the air. She was very determined, an incredibly gifted educator. And now, she's the superintendent of the school system. She was really hard on me, but what I now understand as an adult, especially as a mother, is that you want the absolute best for your kids.

K: Absolutely.

N: As a child, I interpreted her behavior as I just wasn't good enough and I could never be enough for her, or validated, or be accepted by her. Now, I understand that it was her teaching me self-discipline, and me understanding that I could do anything that I wanted to

do in life. It didn't matter if I was a girl or a boy, or how young or old. She also helped to instill in me a really strong work ethic. I look back and think, wow, I'm really grateful for her. Some people say you choose your parents, and my mom and I have gone through definitely a difficult journey in our lives trying to understand each other—my trying to understand her baggage and her life, and her trying to understand my own because I left home when I was 12 years old to go work, and I haven't lived at home since then. This amazing thing happened on my way to giving birth to Hudson where at the time, I thought it was just a work thing, I was 2 weeks late, I've been having contractions and my mom said, "I'm hopping on a plane and you're gonna give birth too, and I just don't wanna miss it." She hopped on a plane and sure enough, I did not give birth. It was a week that went by before I gave birth at the hospital. By then, I was already a week late and everyday we walked, talked, and ate. I never really had that time with her. I got to hear



"...WE JUST HEALED OUR RELATIONSHIP IN SUCH A BEAUTIFUL WAY AND I AM SO GLAD I CHOSE HER AS MY MOTHER. SHE WAS A PERFECT MOTHER FOR ME AND MY DAD WAS ALWAYS THAT ROCK, YOU KNOW. MY DAD WAS ALWAYS THE ONE WHO TOOK US TO SCHOOL EVERY MORNING. AND HE EVEN TRIED TO DO MY HAIR."

—NIKKI, ON HER RELATIONSHIP WITH HER PARENTS

about how motherhood was for her at 21 years old when she first had a kid. We just healed our relationship in such a beautiful way, and I am so glad I chose her as my mother. My dad was always that rock, the one who took us to school every morning. He even tried to do my hair—but I can't go to school with seven ponytails. (Laughs) He was also really hard on me in some way, and he was athletic. He coached me at basketball and softball. I was the firstborn, so I was the boy and the girl.

K: For 3 and 1/2 years, it was all you.

N: It was all me. But he just had this loving kindness that, to this day, when I would get in trouble, he would be the one to sit down with me and talk it through with me. I always felt his warmth, love, and support. Man, I can't tell you what it's like growing up with a father like that as a girl. You look at other men with such confidence, like, I don't have to take something that I don't deserve because I know what a real man is.

K: Exactly. He set the bar high.

N: He woke up with us—all three kids—every night to give us our bottle, he changed the diapers, cooked, took us to school, took me to dance and voice lessons. He would drive 2 hours one way, 2 hours back, and get up at 5 AM to go to work. He was superdad. I warned my husband in the beginning, I said, "Listen—"

K: You got big shoes to fill.

N: Yeah, you got big shoes to fill because I had superdad, you know...

K: Your mom was 21 when she had you, and your father was how old?

N: My father was 24. I'm 34, and I just had my first kid. I know it was a different

time, but to have your first kid at 21 years old? It's something that's so difficult for me to wrap my head around.

K: You said you left home at 12 to move to Orlando to work in the Mickey Mouse Club alongside some of the biggest names in today's entertainment scene.

How was that like?

N: It was a dream come true. Just to be able to be part of the show, and what the show represents is iconic. To be able to be part of its legacy is an honor and truly a blessing, and I could not have asked to have better castmates. The seven of us, we were family from day one—and to be surrounded by so much talent and everyday be inspired by them? Seeing Christina Aguilera at 12 years old sing—just blew my mind. It rocked my world, it was like there was some singing music box. A lot of us have come from these small towns where, from the time when we were kids, this is what we had wanted to do and it's all we've dreamed of. It never ever seemed like a job—it was playtime and it was fun, and so just seeing yourself in someone else's eyes and to finally go, "Oh, I understand you. I know who you are because I am you." I felt like I had finally found this home—a home I never knew existed before—so it was really a wonderful time in my life, and to this day, some of the best years of my life.

K: Is it true that you still keep in touch with Justin Timberlake?

N: Yeah, I also touch base with T.J. Fantini, who's another cast member. But Justin and I, from day one, we hit it off as friends and he's a great guy. Let's talk about how amazingly talented he is—he's a genius. But in terms of as a person, I loved his whole family.

K: You lived with them, right?

N: Actually, his mother wanted to put together a girl group when Justin was in 'NSYNC, so we kinda put our heads together and ended up with five girls. She was like a second mom to me for a really long time—still is. She'll still tell me you know—pardon my language—if my shit stinks. Or if I need to get it together, if I'm doing a really good job, and she's proud of me. I appreciate that.

K: You have two mothers, that's great. In line with the whole Mouseketeer-ing, you mentioned in another interview that you felt somewhat bypassed that all of them were blowing up with their careers...

N: I felt left behind for sure, and a part of me felt that, well, this is it for me. It's really weird when you grow up in this industry all your life, and you learn very quickly the culture of this industry that—

K: It's very fleeting.

N: And you are validated by how famous or what your last project was, or what your next project is. All of these friends of mine had gone on to become some of the biggest stars in the world. (Laughs) I think that only exacerbated the feeling that I'm not really good enough and I'm not worthy—and that they have what it takes and I don't and somebody sees something special in them, and they don't see it in me. It took me a really long time to understand that my journey is just as precious and special. I am so grateful for those times when I felt like a failure, and everything felt hard and I had to start all over again, and again, and again, because I'm so thankful for work. There's not a day that goes by when I'm in Auburn that I'm not grateful to be able to be a part of it. I also now understand that I can stand on my own two feet and this business will never validate me—it never will be what truly brings



(Above) Woobie shoe in brown multi, \$55, Woobie in Light Gray Multi, \$53, both by UMI, umishoes.com • Nikki Dress by THREADS FOR THOUGHT, threadsforthought.com • Flipflops by HAVASIANAS, us.havasianas.com • Neckties by LEENABELL, leenabell.com • Hoodies, t-shirt, and sweatpants, all by GOGENTLYBABY, shop.gogentlybaby.com



"I THINK THAT ONLY EXACERBATED THE FEELING OF I'M NOT REALLY GOOD ENOUGH AND I'M NOT WORTHY AND IF THEY HAVE WHAT IT TAKES AND I DON'T, AND SOMEBODY SEES SOMETHING SPECIAL IN THEM AND THEY DON'T SEE IT IN ME. AND IT TOOK ME A REALLY, REALLY LONG TIME TO UNDERSTAND THAT MY JOURNEY IS JUST AS PRECIOUS AND IT'S JUST AS SPECIAL."

—NIKKI, ON THE STRUGGLES OF HOLLYWOOD AFTER HER CAREER AS A MOUSEKETEER

me joy. It may bring me happiness, but joy, that feeling, that thing that exists inside of you no matter what the exterior circumstances are—this business will never bring me that.

K: It must have just been so hard at that stage, as a teenager, with all those hormones, those crazy feelings.

N: Yeah, it was awful. I remember being in L.A. with my Nana, and sometimes just locking myself in the bathroom and sitting in the tub—no water, no nothing, just with my clothes on and crying and feeling like, what am I gonna do? What am I doing wrong? And I had to pay my rent and get a job if I wanna keep doing what I love, so it was really hard.

K: Did you ever go through schooling, up to college, or you went a different route?

N: I did, actually. College was very important to me—my mom was an educator. Somebody asked me the other day when I feel the sexiest, and for me, it was when I feel educated. I went to the University of Nebraska, which has an on-location program. I had a tutor, essentially a point person, and they would send all my tests and materials through him. He would send them back to school, and I actually graduated two years early, with all straight A's. I had a graduation ceremony with Lance Bass from 'NSYNC; it was just the two of us. It was really special because you miss a lot of normalcy growing up in this business and it was just a sliver of a 'normal' that we got to have the cap and the gown. Our families and friends were there.

K: Smallest graduating class ever.

N: I know, and it was so great and after that, I went into the music business until I moved out to L.A. at 22. We were signed to Lou Pearlman, who also launched 'NSYNC and Backstreet Boys, and he's now in jail because of his really unfortunate business practices. 'NSYNC left him, a lot of groups left him, and record companies didn't wanna deal with him and essentially, our group lost our recording contract from RCA. Lou said, "I'll release you, just sign this agreement. You can make me a fifth member

of your band—" which is what he had done with all the other people, "I'll continue to help you." At that point in time I was like, "Over my dead body." Either way, I was done with him. I was in such a dark place at that point, so disillusioned that I just decided, if I get don't get out of here, I'm gonna die here spiritually. So I moved out to L.A. with my boyfriend at the time, who's now my husband.

K: That's so sweet.

N: I had over a year and a half left in my recording contract and I decided to go to community college, put my feet on the ground, and figure my shit out. I was kinda spinning, and I went to Santa Monica Community College, and I got the first two years of my college degree under my belt. It was the greatest thing in the world that I could've done. I mean, talk about bringing your confidence back.

K: Absolutely.

N: It just made me feel like there's a lot more going on in this world than the music group, this thing, you know. I was so engrossed in sociology and psychology. About 5 days after my music contract officially ended, I went on my first real audition since I've been out there for a network pilot. I was like, "Listen this is my first audition, really back in the game after my contract ended." And 2 days later, I was in Hawaii filming a pilot.

K: Wow. (Laughs)

N: Yeah, you just need to take the time and the universe will be there whenever you get back on your feet.

K: Did you have any 'awkward' college experiences?

N: Being recognized. (Laughs) Going to community college, and being broke as a joke. Not being able to afford groceries and being this 23-year old in community college, and then getting noticed like, "Were you

in that group, *Innorse*? I think I saw you in Vegas," or "Weren't you in the *Mickey Mouse Club*?" Things like that. And they would be like, "What are you doing here?"

K: We were told by your publicist that you are one of the kindest people she knows.

I see it. How do you stay humble in this industry, as you're in a hit show and all that? Do you think it has a lot to do with what you went through?

N: It's so nice that you said that, first of all, just so sweet. I will thank her. It has everything to do with what I went through. My mother would tell me everyday, "Pretty is as pretty does." I grew up knowing that it doesn't matter what you look like on the outside, it's who you are on the inside that matters. I've made so many mistakes and done things that I was like, "Oh, Nikki why did you do or say that?" But you rebound from those and you say, "I'm gonna do better next time." I could've gone the other way, been that jaded person that's like, "Hey, now it's my turn..." Everyday you wake up with a choice. I've been with my husband for 14 years, and people ask



how that happened.

K: Especially in your industry.

N: I wake up next to him every day. I look at him and I say, "I choose you, you're my guy."

K: Very powerful words.

N: You could choose happiness, you could choose to be jaded, or grateful. I just wanna be a person who lives my life with a lot of joy, and I can't do that if I wake up everyday and choose anger, resentment, or frustration.

K: You're so blessed. Now you have a baby boy—so much things going on for you. Let's talk about *Awkward* for a bit. Can you describe your character in three words? And how you got the role in the first place.

N: Well-intentioned...I'm trying to figure out a word for lack of a skill set? (Laughs)

K: (Laughs) Sometimes inappropriate. So funny.

N: Well-intentioned, bright, and shiny.

K: (Laughs) She is!

They had been looking for an actress for this role for quite some time, and as what usually happens in the business, they go through all the names first and then they go through all the people that are at the top agencies. CAA, UCA—and then they start reaching out to everyone else.

K: I love how you put that.

N: I was not in one of those agencies, but I had this really "go get 'em" agent and he just kept pushing me to read the pilot, and go in on the audition. I kept saying to him, "Joey, I've gone in on auditions for mothers all season long, and I keep getting told I'm too young." And then to play a mom of a freshman? Like, this is a no. No, no, no.

K: Not gonna happen.

N: Then he called back and he was like, they realized they've seen you before, they know how young you are. So I read the pilot, and it was literally the best pilot I have read in years. It was such a different voice.

K: It's so well-written.

N: It had this perfect mixture of humor and heart, and I just thought, I just want 5 minutes in a room to play this person because there was something inside of me that can bring Lacey to life because

you felt like he was not adapting?

N: Here's the thing about motherhood: I think there are things you think you'll never do, and there are things you think you always do. I've learned to never say never, and never say always. Except with Hudson, because I will always love him, but I think that the reason that Lacey and her relationship with Jenna is so compelling is because it's so universal. We heighten the situation because it's comedy and it's TV, but every mother knows what it feels like to do something with the best of intentions and have it go

horribly awry, interpreted by your child in such a different way than what you thought it would be. I would like to think that by the time Hudson is a freshman in high school and he's going through something like this, I will be really quick to handle it, instead of giving him a confrontation. I'm sure that I will smack it up some other way, and I'll have to ask for forgiveness.

K: After that letter, your husband on the show almost left you for good. In real life, if your spouse had committed something so hurtful to your kid, do you think you'd leave or stick it out?

N: There's another thing where you say never and always. You never know in life and I've never been that person who, when people ask me about my marriage, it's like, "Oh yeah, we're gonna be together for the rest of our lives." I sure hope so. He is the best. I wouldn't know what to do without him. But you never know what life is gonna give you. In terms of him doing something that hurt Hudson, that definitely would have to be dependent on the situation.

K: Let's talk about your husband, Ryan. Is it true that he was formerly from the band *Take Five* before he became an entertainment lawyer?

N: That is very true. I was lucky. I got the



she's so different from me. If I can bring her to life, I can do anything. I just loved her, and I guess a lot of other actors saw her as being this really cold, kind of bitchy mom. She had a kid at 16 years old, what do you expect? The creator, Lauren Iungerich, just looked at me and was like, "Oh my God, you're her." I tested for it and eventually, I got it.

K: In the first season, Lacey wrote this awful and heartbreaking letter to Jenna about coming out of her shell. Would you ever do the same to your son, Hudson, if



"I'VE LEARNED TO NEVER SAY NEVER,
AND NEVER SAY ALWAYS. EXCEPT
WITH HUDSON, BECAUSE I WILL
ALWAYS LOVE HIM"

musician spirit.

K: So how did you two meet, and was it love at first sight? (Laughs)

N: (Laughs) I was in a place where I definitely was not looking for a boyfriend or a relationship. I got out of a long-term relationship—

K: This was with JC Chasez right? For five years?

N: Yes. I was not looking for anything serious whatsoever, and I could tell Ryan was the guy you settle down with. He's the guy you get serious with. There was this part of me that was like, "Oh my gosh, I have to pursue this and see where this goes because he's so kind and such a good person." I promised myself I would only look for the nicest guy from there on—the ones that know how to treat a girl. And he was that guy.

K: You both had your musical careers at that time, right?

N: Yeah, we were so young and he was on tour, and I was on tour—I was having so much fun being a girl with other girls. I just did not want anything serious at all, so it wasn't love at first sight because I was being crowded by—

K: All the noise.

N: All the noise, and my own personal needs that I wanted at that time in my life. We dated and about 4 months into it, he was just kinda like, "Listen, why don't you go do your thing and if we are ready to pursue this in a more serious way, then give me a call." He did that very adult thing—and he's a year younger than me so I was like—

K: Wow.

N: Here is a 19-year old kid that's doing this adult responsible thing. So I went away and months went on and the more I thought about it, I felt like, "What am I doing?"

K: You met him through friends?

N: I met him when he was in the group

Nails: Top and shorts, both by **TORY BURCH**, toryburch.com • Nude backstrap heels by **NINE WEST**, ninewest.com **Headwear:** Colored onesie by **FORE!! AXEL AND HUDSON**, foreaxelandhudson.com



Take Five: He was also signed to Lou Pearlman, so he lived in Orlando and you know when you're down there, we all interacted.

K: How long were you together before he proposed, and how did he pop the question?

N: (Laughs) We were together for 10 years. We had a really good friend who was kinda like a mom to both of us. She has known me for a very long time and she said to Ryan, "Right now you can't really push Nikki. You need to try to be her friend and hang out with her. If you push her, she's gonna run away." He just said, "Well, what if I just came over and brought over some Chinese food?" We just sat, had a drink, and

chilled. I was like, I think that sounds doable. So he brought over Chinese food, a bottle of wine, and one rose. We ate, talked for hours, and when he proposed, he had the same red roses and there were candles all around the apartment. I was like, "What is going on?" That's not what we discussed—

K: (Laughs) That's not what was discussed in the package.

N: Exactly! I knew something was up, it was just too romantic. I was thinking, "What is going on?" And he was saying, "Nothing. I just want to have a nice, romantic dinner." We finished our dinner, and he didn't eat a thing because he was so nervous. Finally at the end of it, he gave me this fortune cookie, and

Nikki: Dress by LOFT, loft.com • Shoes by NINE WEST, ninewest.com • Necklace by LEENABELL, leenabell.com • Headband by FORE!! AXEL AND HUDSON, foreaxelandhudson.com

it said—

K: Here's your future.

N: Yeah, "Will you marry me?"

K: That is so sweet.

N: And he then pulled the ring out.

K: That is the sweetest. Fast forward to your pregnancy. Were there any difficulties, funny experiences, odd cravings?

N: I was sick for the first 5 months—all day. In the first trimester, you're just so exhausted. That first wave of tiredness hits you, and it's like I've never felt tired like that before. I was really sick, and also I was working on *Awkward* and my husband and I decided not to tell anyone until almost my 5th month. So for those first 5 months, I was on set working sick as a dog, and going back to my trailer. There were moments in the middle of the scene where I was like, this is disgusting, but I would puke in my mouth.

K: (Laughs) I think we've all done that.

N: I got to figure out how to swallow it before I say my next line.

K: That's hilarious. And how do you stay a hot momma? You are so fit and you just gave birth. It's not fair.

N: I was very, very, very lucky with this. I'm a horrible eater—I'll eat a kale salad if it's in front of me and if it's easy to get to, but if it's not, I'm gonna get something that's easy and it might be chicken nuggets. I have to work on that because I want my son to have healthy eating habits. I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that I was very much in shape before I got pregnant. As soon as I felt good enough to be upright, I put him in the stroller and started walking around. If I can get home and there's an hour of daylight I put him in the stroller and go for a walk, and we just stroll. It's good for the mind and body.

K: Most memorable experiences so far with Hudson. Everyday, right?

N: Everyday, and I have this specific one when he was just born. He has colic and when you are on a 3 to 6 week baby bender where the baby with colic cries all day long, you're beyond yourself. It was in the middle of the night and I was breastfeeding him, and I was just sobbing. I was so tired and overwhelmed. After I finished feeding him, I was holding him for a second upright, for at least 20 to 30 minutes afterwards. He just grinned from ear to ear, it was the first time he smiled. I just remembered my heart melting, and at that moment I didn't remember the last 3 weeks and how tired and overwhelmed I was. I went on that high through the next couple of weeks.

K: Did you plan to have a baby? What was your reaction when you found out you were expecting?

N: It's so strange, the whole journey, because I was always kind of on the fence about having babies. And then my sister had her babies and I fell in love with my nieces, and it of course softened me to the idea. All of a sudden, one day I was like, I'm ready for a baby. I could feel this little spirit wanting to be born. It sounds so weird, but I could feel his energy. I knew it was a boy, I knew he wanted to be born in January. I said to my husband, let's start trying in January. Of course the practical one said, listen, it could take a while. A lot of my friends are having a hard time, but I think we should start trying. I'm old enough, and right out of the gate, I got pregnant. I mean the very first time.

K: He's really for you. He was heaven sent.

N: Exactly. I knew that I could feel it and he was ready but I didn't know it would be the first time, and, so when I took that pregnancy test I really wasn't that shocked. Now, my husband was so shocked. He kind of just gave me a little pat on the back and went and crawled into bed. I sat on the couch and got angry, like, that's it? I go and sit in the back and say, "I just told you that I'm pregnant." And he was like, "I know babe, I know."

K: That's a lot to take in.

N: Yeah, and he was shocked actually for the next 5 months, I would say. And then about month 6 he really started coming around. (Laughs)

K: It's so funny how men react so differently. I know it's very early but what scares you the most about having a son? Like, the bullying, fighting...

N: I would say not being able to understand his journey at times. Being a woman you'll know





Nikki Dress by LOFT, loft.com Hudson: Black and white striped long-sleeved shirt by GO GENTLY BABY, shop.gogentlybaby.com
• Jeans by MARC JACOBS, marcjacobs.com

I WAS ALWAYS KIND OF ON THE FENCE ABOUT HAVING BABIES, AND THEN MY SISTER HAD HER BABIES AND I FELL IN LOVE WITH MY NIECES AND IT OF COURSE SOFTENED ME TO THE IDEA. AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN ONE DAY I WAS LIKE, I'M READY FOR IT, YEAH, I'M READY FOR A BABY. AND I COULD FEEL THIS LIKE, I DON'T KNOW, THIS LITTLE SPIRIT LIKE, WANTING TO BE BORN."

—NIKKI, ON STARTING A FAMILY AND HAVING CHILDREN



if your daughter is having boy trouble having her period, or is insecure or whatever it maybe—I can lock into that because I know where she's coming from.

K: It's just different with a boy.

N: I wanna feel locked in to that. I know I won't be able to in the way that my husband will. But I want to be able to kind of lock into that with him and really, really be able to understand him. And I also think sometimes boys could be so daring and wild, and sometimes not think about the consequences of their actions. That also scares me.

K: What's in your mommy purse/diaper bag that you can't leave home without?

N: Diapers, wipes, *Aden + Anais* swaddle blanket...they have so many uses. 10 extra bibs because I can't stand a dirty bib, an extra outfit for accidents, *Hyland's* teething tablets, *Wubbanub* pacifier, *Sophie the Giraffe* (teething toy), sunscreen, baby food, and a bottle.

K: How do you manage your schedule with a baby in tow?

N: First, I could not do it without my

nanny, Mini. She is my everything. We work really long hours on the show. I don't think I would be able to function without knowing that my child is in the best hands possible. Even still, I have meltdowns when I can't make it home in time to put him to bed. Organization and thinking ahead is also critical. I set alarms on my phone to remind me to do anything and everything—from picking up diapers to rescheduling his pediatrician appointment. At the end of the day, I remind myself that I did my best. You never cross everything off your list and some area of your life always gets neglected. Usually, it's the gym for me—but if I spend that extra hour with my baby rather than at the gym, I am a much happier human. He is my priority, not my abs.

K: Virtues you will instill in Hudson.

N: I am a big believer in kindness. Treat others the way you would like to be treated. I also love a person with manners. Others high on the list are generosity, humility, confidence, commitment, gratitude, forgiveness, and of course love...of yourself and others. ☺

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MAGAZINE

WEB COVER STORY



NIKKI DELOACH BY INDA REID



IMAGE SOURCE: RODIN ECKENROTH/GETTY IMAGES NORTH AMERICA

Nikki DeLoach started acting when she was just a kid. She has been involved in performing as a whole: producing, acting and stage productions. She became interested in acting when she was in *The Mickey Mouse Club*. Since then she has had roles including Lacey Hamilton on the TV series *Awkward*, and Natalie on the Hallmark movie *Truly, Madly, Sweetly*.

In her new film, she plays the main character, Natalie who dreams of owning her own bakery one day. In the beginning, she owns her own cupcake food truck but is given a chance to see her dreams come true.

"Natalie is a dreamer and a baker. We meet her at a time in her life where she is starting over – after her boyfriend not only broke her heart but stole all of her recipes and told the world they were his. She meets Dylan Neal's character when they inherit a bakery together through her mentor Bea, who just so happens to be his aunt. He wants to sell the bakery, while Natalie wants to preserve her mentor's memory and also make her dream of owning a bakery come true," DeLoach says.

"It's a story about not giving up on your dreams. It's also a story about taking a leap of faith and learning to trust again. I think

04

NIKKI DELOACH

that's something everyone can relate to. Also, this is one of the sweetest Hallmark movies I've done. There's lots of comedy and Dylan and I truly are great partners. Doing this movie with him was pure joy."

When she originally started performing she was involved in dancing, singing and acting. She started acting in commercials, stage performances and then landed a spot on *The Mickey Mouse Club*.

"It wasn't until I did *The Mickey Mouse Club*, that I really took an interest in acting. MMC started to produce a teen drama called *Emerald Cove*, and I was asked to be a part of it. I absolutely loved it," DeLoach says. "In terms of being a performer, I knew I wanted to do that at the age of 3. It seems young, but when you know you know. I first asked for dance lessons, then voice lessons, then acting. I couldn't get enough. I absolutely love being a storyteller. It is one of the great joys of my life and that feeling has only grown over the years," DeLoach says.

In addition to acting in this film, DeLoach signed a development deal with Hallmark to produce a Christmas film, *Reunited at Christmas*. She will also be playing the main character, Samantha who reconnects with her family for Christmas because of a tragedy.

"It's about a family who hasn't been together in years over the holidays. When the matriarch of the family, Nana Madaline, passes away, she leaves behind a dying wish which was that the whole family spend one last Christmas together, in her house, doing all the traditions they used to," DeLoach says. "The family is reunited, but it's quite the journey for them to get there. It's a beautiful story with so much heart."

DeLoach explained what it was like to produce and act in this film rather than just work one role. She was able to be involved in her



IMAGE SOURCE: MATT WINKELMEYER/GETTY IMAGES NORTH AMERICA

passion for storytelling as a whole.

"It's been fantastic. I love the entire process of bringing a story to life. From the original idea, to development, the script, casting, set design, costumes, music – all of it," DeLoach says. "It's the way I've always wanting to work in this business. I'm so grateful to Hallmark for saying yes to the project and for making it happen."

Having done both television and film acting DeLoach has seen both sides of the spectrum. She says that she enjoys each of them but for different reasons.

"I love the consistency of being on a show. I love that you get to take a character in so many different directions. In a movie, you are telling one story. On a TV series, especially if it goes for several seasons, you have the opportunity to tell many stories," DeLoach says. "With that being said, I love the balance that doing movies gives me in my personal life. I do a movie for a month and then I get to be home with my family until the next. And that is quite nice. There are pros in both and I'm so fortunate to be able to work in both worlds."

In her free time, she is one of the founders and writers for the blog, 'What We Are'. She started the blog with her friend Jen Dede to help support and connect with other women. The blog highlights the stories of all kinds of women which can be seen @welcometowhatweare on Instagram and Twitter. She encourages those who want their story to be heard to reach out.

"My dear friend Jen Dede and I have been wanting to start "What We Are" for years. It really stemmed from a place of wanting to live a truly authentic life. To be real at every moment with where we are and who we are – which meant embracing the sometimes messy, scary, and truth. We believe that vulnerability is a superpower. And by being vulnerable and open, you can truly connect to others. Plus, we are so lucky to be surrounded by so many incredible women! Women are amazing! I mean, really. We do ALL the things! So, we really wanted to tell those stories," DeLoach says.

"No one knows what it's like to be a woman like another woman. I look at the women around me in complete awe of their strength, grace, intellect, kindness, compassion, and fight. We have so much to give and the world can greatly benefit from our gifts. Things are absolutely changing for the better for women and I'm so thrilled that I get to be here to witness it.... We are so proud of all the women we are highlighting every month. If you have a story you would love to tell, please reach out to us."

She also is the spokesperson for humanitarian organizations like The Alzheimer's Association and Children's Hospital of L.A. Children's Hospital is a nonprofit organization that seeks to help children with their medical needs. The Alzheimer's Association seeks to support both caregivers and people struggling with Alzheimer's.

"Giving back is what it's all about. I like to wake up every day and ask how can I serve humanity today," DeLoach says. "If you are looking to get involved in a charity or give back, please check out The Alzheimer's Association and/or a Children's Hospital near you. Places like Children's Hospital Los Angeles exist because of donations. They turn no child away. If you don't have the money to donate but you have time, there are so many ways you can get involved. It all makes a huge difference."

To see more of Nikki DeLoach you can tune into *Truly, Madly, Sweetly* on Hallmark. You can also watch her in December in *Reunited at Christmas* on the Hallmark Channel.

timetorelax

**Nikki
DeLoach**

MY NIGHT AT HOME

STARS TELL **inTouch** ABOUT THE LAST TIME THEY STAYED IN



I watched... *Hello Privilege, It's Me, Chelsea*. I respect that she is choosing to now do projects that have purpose and explore subjects that matter.

I texted... my friend and writing partner, Megan [Mitchell], because we were celebrating a script we just sold to Hallmark.

I listened to... the "Fair Fight 2020" episode of *Pod Save America*. This podcast makes me feel informed.



I shopped online for... Madewell's new fall line.

I kissed... My children [William and Bennett, with her husband, Ryan Goodell], because I love to.



I played... "Ice Cream Shop" with the kids. Bennett got a new ice cream cart toy, so we sold and ate a lot of pretend ice cream.



I read... a short film script written by a young man from my hometown, Blackshear, Ga., that's about his younger brother fighting cancer.



I ate... bone broth made by my friend Megan, who's also a chef. If you don't follow her on Instagram, you should!

I wore... a pair of pajama pants, a T-shirt and my *Golden Girls* sweatshirt.

Nikki's new Christmas movie, *Two Turtle Doves*, airs Nov. 1 at 9 p.m. on Hallmark Movies & Mysteries.



GREAT ESCAPE

Relax!

SPOOKY SAVANNAH

THIS HISTORIC CITY OFFERS PLENTY OF CHILLS AND THRILLS ALONG WITH ITS CHARM AND BEAUTY

In Savannah, Ga., history is everywhere. "It's the oldest city in the state — and it's beautiful and very, very haunted," actress Nikki DeLoach tells *Closer*. Visitors seeking out the spine-tingling side of Savannah, which was established in 1733, can sign up for a ghost tour or spend the night in a haunted hotel. "It's a real thing," says Nikki. "You can hear them banging on doors and walking down halls!" Less thrill-inclined tourists might prefer to view Savannah's gracious old homes and lovely public parks on a horse and buggy ride. Says Nikki, "It's a really cool way to take in all the history."

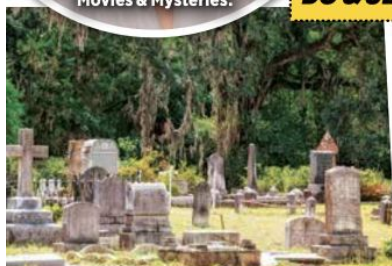
— Louise A. Barile,
reporting by Diana Cooper



On Location

Nikki's new holiday movie, *Two Turtle Doves*, will premiere Nov. 1 on Hallmark Movies & Mysteries.

THINGS TO DO & SEE



Great Ghosts

The famous Bonaventure Cemetery, which was featured in the 1994 best-seller *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, offers guided tours.



Gracious Grazing

"Elizabeth's on 37th is an old home turned into a great restaurant," says Nikki.

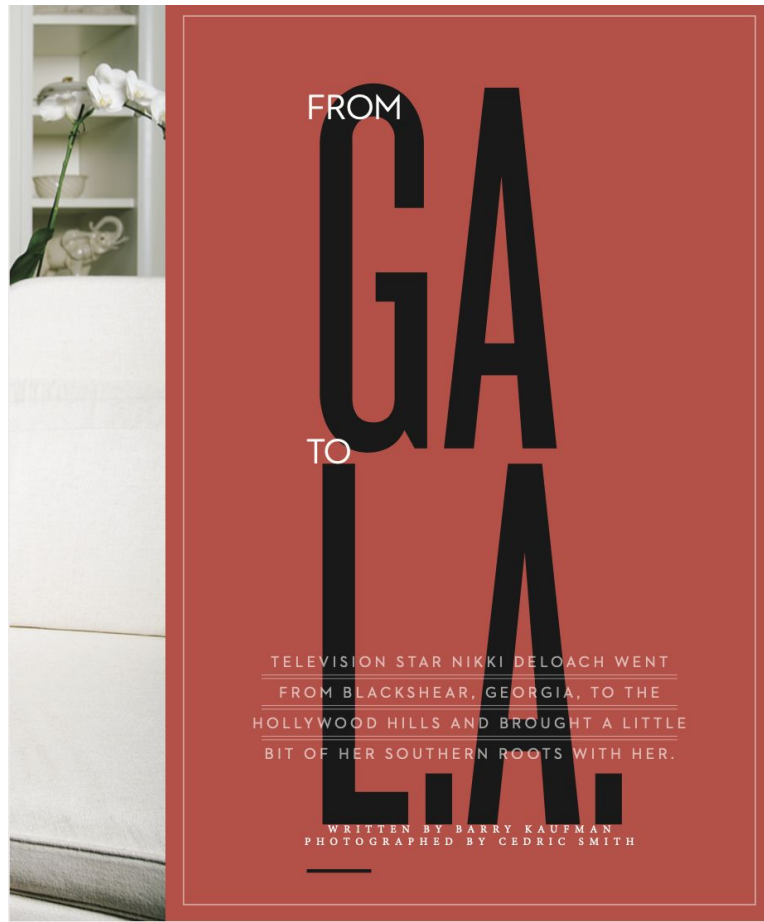
Take Savannah Home!

Just Bee Cause

Taste honey meant for tea and cooking and as an accompaniment for cheese with an Everyday Honey set. \$39, savannahbee.com



South magazine



It's a Wednesday in Los Angeles and Nikki DeLoach is loading her kids William and Bennet into the car for a doctor's appointment. It's an almost quintessential mom moment, struggling with a car seat with a cell phone cocked under her ear. It's also a far cry from her other life as an actress, strutting the red carpet at events ranging from Elton John's Oscar Party to People StyleWatch's Annual Denim Party.

Depending on your viewing habits, you either know Nikki DeLoach as the endearingly self-centered Lacey Hamilton on MTV's "Awkward," or you know her from the slew of Hallmark movies she's recently made her specialty, including "Truly, Madly, Sweetly," "The Perfect Catch," "A Dream of Christmas" and "Reunited at Christmas."

It's a resume that means you've most certainly seen her in something. And it's almost worlds apart from the town of Blackshear, Georgia where she grew up.

"Growing up there, it was this idyllic small town, and by the way it still is," she said. "It really was such an incredible place to be raised. I feel like in these small towns... I was raised by a community. Whether it was in church or school or sports, this whole community kind of kept their eyes on you and made sure you were taken care of. Everyone kind of came together to raise everyone's children."

Landing a modeling contract at a young age following a successful run on the pageant circuit, she

left the one-stoplight town of Blackshear for the bright lights of Los Angeles and New York. It eventually landed her on the All-New Mickey Mouse Club, a show that launched the careers of stars like Ryan Gosling, Britney Spears and NSYNC. Fueled by her newfound stardom, she moved to LA with her grandmother full-time in 1994.

"Because I started acting and had been there young, I had been introduced to big cities like New York and LA," she said. "But when I moved here, I think the biggest shock to the system was the size, the traffic, and it was just looking around and thinking, 'Where's the community? Where are the people that genuinely care about you as a human and not for what you can do for them or how much money you can make them?'"

As she built her career, she also began building her community. Inspired by the hometown she left behind and the simple mantra, "If it doesn't exist, create it," she began cultivating a community of actors who support one another through the difficult life of being a working actor.

"We're calling ourselves the New Hollywood," she said with a laugh. "And it's made all the difference in the world. I'm just so grateful... That's something small towns do without thinking. In big cities, if you want that in your world you have to make it yourself. It's been a gamechanger for me."

She's also built a community through her writing, launching a blog with fellow writer Jen Ded called "What We Are." Billed as a community where women "of all walks of life to share unfiltered stories and experiences on various issues women face today," What We Are has built

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Nikki DeLoach in "Love to the Rescue," slated for release this year on the Hallmark channel

a strong following of women who are ready to drop the Instagram filter and revel in their shared experiences.

"There are some really good (stories on the site)," she said. "I love Jamie Lynn Sigler's piece on asking for help. I think that's a really big one for women. We've been told by society, and we also tell ourselves, we can do anything: go to work, take care of kids; we can do all of it. The truth of the matter is, we can't. It's hard. You're carrying the weight of the world around. And also, you have a full-time job. It's really difficult."

That theme of asking for help resonated with

"WE'RE CALLING OURSELVES THE NEW HOLLYWOOD. AND IT'S MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD."

DeLoach, who found herself in that position when her son Bennett was born with a heart defect that required open-heart surgery when he was just five days old.

"I'd never had to ask for help in my life. I was one of those women who said, 'I have this.' ... What I had was strength to move forward, everything else I needed help on." She also found catharsis in writing about her father's diagnosis of Pick's disease, a form of dementia.

"I actually find out about my dad and Bennett about a week apart. The one thing I will say is I'm a huge person of faith. It's my rock, it's my foundation. I never could have gotten through what I've been through the last two years without my faith,"

she said. "And I could have not gotten around it without the people around me. I'm writing an article right now about angels; these are the real-life angels."

These angels, these communities DeLoach has cultivated around herself, are at heart extensions of the community in which she grew up. One where everyone made sure you were taken care of and who came together in times of need.

It's this sense of community she remembers when she talks about Blackshear, a place she still returns to as much as possible, to recharge on the family farm where she and her husband Ryan Goodell were married, and where most of her family still lives.

"I just miss being on my family farm. I miss putting my feet in the grass. There's something in that soil that feeds me... Just being able to be there with my family, that's what I miss the most," she said. "I want my kids connected to earth and this specific place in the world that has meant so much to me."

You can catch Nikki DeLoach as the lead in the upcoming Hallmark movie "Love to the Rescue," set to premiere March 23 on Hallmark Channel. ■



01. Emerald Cove 02. Misery Loves Company 03. Gunfighter's Moon 04. Never Give Up: The Jimmy V Story 05. Walker, Texas Ranger 06. Traveller 07. Longshot 08. North Shore 09. Grounded for Life 10. The Net 2.0 11. Windfall 12. CSI: NY 13. Cold Case 14. Law Dogs 15. Without a Trace 16. The House Bunny 17. An American Carol 18. Days of Our Lives 19. Flying Lessons 20. The River Why 21. The Trial 22. Love & Other Drugs 23. The Defenders 24. Mask Maker 25. Traffic Light 26. Answers to Nothing 27. Hollywoo 28. Ringer 29. A Golden Christmas 30. Blood Moon 31. The Devil's in the Details 32. CSI: Crime Scene Investigation 33. Saving Norman 34. Another Happy Anniversary 35. The Hunted 36. Major Crimes 37. NCIS 38. The Exes 39. Criminal Minds 40. Ricky Robot Arms 41. Sirens 42. Castle 43. Castle 44. Mad Men 45. A Kind of Magic 46. The Player 48. Grey's Anatomy 49. Christmas Land 50. HeLLA 51. Awkward 52. A Dream of Christmas 53. The Jury 54. The After War 55. The Perfect Catch 56. Truly, Madly, Sweetly 57. Reunited at Christmas 58. Love Takes Flight 59. Love to the Rescue

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A-List #NailingIt



PHOTO BY BENJAMIN S. HARRIS AND MARISSA W. LESTER/REXUS

This self-proclaimed UGA football fan is married to boy-band member Ryan Goodell of Take 5 fame!

On The Move

South Georgia native and budding actress **Nikki DeLoach** has virtually done it all. From rubbing elbows with Justin Timberlake and Ryan Reynolds as one of the original cast members of *The All-New Mickey Mouse Club* to taking part in the '90s girl group *Innocence* (where Britney Spears got her start before going solo), DeLoach has run with the best of them. Now, the 35-year-old stunner is conquering TV once again with MTV's hit show *Awkward*, which recently kicked off the second half of its fourth season. DeLoach plays Lacey Hamilton, mother of the show's main character, Jenna Hamilton (Ashley Rickards). Here, she dishes on MTV success, her former *NSYNC boyfriend and Mickey Mouse Club memories. @nikkideLoach -Alison Mitchell

Give us the scoop on the new season of *Awkward*.

This whole season is bigger because it's senior year. We're going on location for spring break. Woo-hoo! Let's just say we're heading somewhere beachy.

You've gone from a teen star to playing a teen's mom. What has that transition been like?

When I first got the job, I had so many friends of mine, who are actresses, say "I can't believe you're [taking the role] and playing a mom so soon." [To me though], it was just one of the most incredible pilots I've ever read. I feel so honored to play Lacey.

Speaking of your childhood, please dish to us on your Mickey Mouse Club crush.

Oh, my gosh, I had more than a crush—I had a boyfriend! I dated JC [Chase] for almost five years. I remember getting on the show and being all goopy-eyed from the start. We ended up dating after the show and through the beginning of *NSYNC. He was my high school sweetheart. [My *Awkward* co-stars] Jillian [Rose Reed] and Molly [Tatlov] are at that age where they grew up crazy *NSYNC fans, so we'd run into JC or Lance and they would just be starstruck. Hilarious.

What would we find you doing when you have a chance to visit your home in South Georgia?

I like going up to Atlanta for [The University of] Georgia vs. Georgia Tech games and visiting my friends. My mom, nana, sister and I used to always do a mega-shopping trip for Christmas up there!



OK! PET FRIENDLY



Photographer Christopher Ameruso holds his Chittys and Red Stevie Blue.

AWKWARD'S NIKKI DELOACH 'HE LOVES AFFECTION'

"He has energy for days and is very feisty," Nikki DeLoach, who plays Lacey Hamilton on MTV's *Awkward.*, tells OK! about her cat, Ripley. "He loves to give and get love, which is my favorite thing in the world to do. He is still a young kitty so he loves to play with any pole that has a dangle. Most of all, he loves tons of cuddles and affection. He meets me at the door as soon as I get home, wanting love. Then, he will follow me throughout the house and, as soon as I am still, he will lay across my feet to get his rubs."

DELIGHTFUL DELOACH

At 12, singer Nikki DeLoach joined Justin Brinney (opens on 'The Mickey Mouse Club') and signed a record deal and went into acting as Lacey Hamilton on MTV's #1 scripted film, she starred in *Love & Order: Bay* and the French comedy *Mollycose*. Other NBC's 'Wendell' and Fox's 'North Shore', CW's 'Beverly Hills', *Adolescence* to all of this, Nikki

DELIGHTFUL DELOACH

At 12, singer Nikki Delouch joined Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera, and Brince Spears on *The Mickey Mouse Club*. And, as most post-Mouseketeers do, she signed a record deal and went into acting. She's perhaps best known for her role as Lacey Hamilton on MTV's #1 scripted and critically acclaimed show, *Wizards*.¹⁰ In film, she starred in *Love & Other Drugs* opposite Jake Gyllenhaal, *Flying Lessons*, and the French comedy *Malibu*. Other TV credits include series regular roles on NBC's "Windfall" and Fox's "North Shore," and most recently she occurred on the CW's "Ringer." Adding to all of this, Nikki achieved one of her proudest goals: She graduated in the spring of 2011 from the University of Maryland, with degrees in both psychology and English.

How would you describe your personal style?
I like simple, feminine, and fun with a classic twist.

What's your favorite item in your closet? I did this French movie called *Full Moon*. It changed my life in terms of style because of being surrounded by the most stylish women. I was gifted with my first pair of Christian Louboutin by the lead actress, Florence Foresti, who is a magic. For the premiere, my friend, the incredible French designer Delphine Marivier, designed and made this sexy black jumper for me—the first time a designer ever custom-made something for me... the fact that it was by someone as talented and beautiful as Delphine just made it all the more special.

What's always in your purse? ID, a credit card, some cash, lip gloss, powder, Elizabeth Arden 8-hour cream Skin Protectant, gum, and my cell phone.

What are you reading? *Just Lady I Give: A Memoir of Sex* by Carol Churchill

What's your weekend look? Sticking with simple, feminine, fun. I usually go with Denim of Virtue jeans, James Perse leggings, Erika Costa t-shirts, flowy skirts from Ranny Brook, or Johnny Was dresses. For shoes, beat-up five-toes or Hawaiian flip-flops. I like soft fabric.

Who are your favorite head-to-toe designers? There's the always elegant and wonderful Chanel and Christian Dior. I mean, these two fashion houses can literally dress you head-to-toe including makeup and a fragrance.

What's your favorite low-price secret weapon store? *Left.*

What kind of watch do you wear? The Michael Kors Espresso Glitz. My mom gave it to me for my birthday last year. I love it.

What's your earliest fashion memory? My first performance in front of the entire high school when I was four. I performed a Peppermint Patty song and dance in a red-and-white striped leotard, dance tights, white lace short socks, jazz shoes, and a white ribbon.

Who's your favorite artist or photographer? I love portraits by Mario Testino or Richard Avedon. William Eggleston, Zena Holloway, Alexandra Sophia...the list goes on. A photo can be amazingly artistic with exceptional skill, but it must capture my emotions in some way...like Josh de Roy.

What's your favorite scent? I love Flowerbomb as well as Miss Marlin Tropical perfumes all because it reminds me of Hawaii and the beach. Also, an oil spray called "Georgia Rain" because it reminds me of home.

What's your favorite vacation destination? Hawaii.

Do you overpack or underpack? I pack just enough....
 plus or minus an outfit or two.

What's your go-to boutique in LA? Satyr.

Elizabeth
Aiken Eight
Hour Cream,
\$19.50
Worx's, South
Coast Plaza
774-454-0411

CHAMPION

Walter & Gail
Flowerbowl
perfume, 575,
Wardrobe at
The Green, L4
173-930-7733
walmart.com

On Flickr: JONGCHAMP darts; [72], JONGCHAMP: Jack Good Photography / 114438-1963; bongbong.com; Jimmy Choo
Beverly Hills: 5/10, Jimmy Choo. Blk 1110 960 1941; Serevski online - Serevski Online Inc. serevski.com

Easy Dye
Summer
open-back dress
in cotton poplin,
\$425, easy
brazil.com

MIAMI LIVING

PEOPLE



Nikki DeLoach Welcomes Parenthood

This country girl is not like her TV character, but she did learn a few things about being a mom from playing one on *Awkward*

Words by Claudia Paredes | Photographer: Hellen Kay | Hair and Make-up: Allison Noelle

Nikki DeLoach plays Lacey Hamilton, a young, hip mom on MTV's hit TV show, *Awkward*. Lacey is known for her good intentions that tend to backfire. Being the parent of a teenager is not easy, especially when the parent is growing up herself, while raising a child, such as in Lacey's case.

Now that Nikki is the mother of 11-month-old William Hudson, she is able to relate much more to her character, and has learned a few things about being a mom from playing her. We are as addicted to the show as you are, so we made sure to ask a few questions about what to expect this fall (began September 23rd) from *Awkward*. Nikki also shared her new experiences as a mother, her hobbies, and how she became a writer for SheKnows.com.

Miami Living: What's the best part about playing Lacey Hamilton?

Nikki DeLoach: For me, the mother-daughter relationship. With comedy you have to make everything very specific, but you deal with universal things, and that mother-daughter relationship is so universal, all of us girls can relate to it.

ML: Do you identify with your character, or would you say you two are different?

ND: We are slightly different. I am now a mother, so we have that in common. Lacey always has the best intentions and has such a good heart, but the executions are not always the best. I also think I have that in common with her, wanting to do something right and having it go

wrong. The other thing we have in common is I've been with my husband for 14 years and Lacey has been with her high school sweetheart her whole life. That's where the similarities end. I'm from South Georgia, and I love wearing cowboy boots and drinking beers. I'm a country girl. Lacey is far from it. Most of the time I leave the house not wearing makeup and wearing a baseball cap. Lacey would not be caught dead in a baseball cap.

ML: Is there anything you can tell us about the fourth season?

ND: With Jenna, college is drawing near, there's a lot of empty nest happening. Jenna has been Lacey's only child and her sole focus—that's a loss that I don't know if she is prepared to experience. It's going to play out in an emotional way, but also in funny ways. And there's a cool little twist at the end that I can't say anything about.

ML: Would you say you have learned anything about being a parent from Lacey?

ND: Yes, I have learned there is a way you love your child, that you don't have words to describe it. I started learning that playing Lacey. There is a lot that Jenna doesn't know of how much Lacey sacrificed, and how she was always there for Jenna. I learned that no matter what your kids say to you, or what they do, you are always going to be there for them. I also learned that sometimes the child parents you. Sometimes you don't know what's best, and you don't have all the answers, and it's your kid who has the wise words.

ML: What has been the most difficult part of being a new parent?

ND: I was having a hard time trying to be a working mom and being there for my kid. I read in this book, to let go of the idea of having balance in your life, because it doesn't exist. It's been really hard accepting that sometimes I won't be able to be with my kid and that's going to hurt. I'm trying really hard to work on that right now.

ML: Any tips for new moms?

ND: You are going to make mistakes and not always get it right. You are going to lose your patience and you are going to feel horrible about that because you have such a blessing in your child. So every turn be compassionate and kind to yourself.

ML: What do you like to do in your spare time?

ND: I love being with friends and family—grabbing cocktails, drinking wine and having conversations, working out, hiking with friends. Being able to experience first things with the baby—first gym class, first play date...

ML: You started your acting career fairly young on *The Mickey Mouse Club*. What was it like for you being a child actor?

ND: My experience was amazing. I knew what I wanted to do from the

time I was a little kid. I just wanted to be an entertainer. It was a wonderful experience.

ML: If you weren't an actress, what would you be?

ND: I went to school for Psychology and English. I would probably be practicing as a psychologist. Being creative is also a strong force; I would have to be doing something creative, maybe writing.

ML: What made you become a contributing writer on *SheKnows.com*?

ND: I love the organization, and after being pregnant, sometimes I felt so isolated. I fall down, I make mistakes, and I wanted mothers to know that's OK. You're going to have breakdowns and after that you're going



to have a breakthrough. You don't have to be perfect. I'm an expert at not being perfect. I wanted other women to know they are not alone.

ML: If you could go anywhere tomorrow, where would you go?

ND: Paris. The scene over there is very inspiring. They live their life where everything matters. They want to have the best bread, the best cheese. It's about enjoying everything that you do. What's the purpose of living life if you can't live it to the fullest? I really love that perspective. I experienced a lot of joy while I was over there. I'm always wanting to go back, so I would hop on a plane and go back to Paris.

ML: What three words best describe you?

ND: Dedicated, loving, and spirited.

ML: Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

ND: Please tune in and check out the second half of the fourth season of *Awkward*, and check out my blog on www.SheKnows.com. ML

soap OPERA digest



Spotlight
On...

Nikki DeLoach

(Lacey, **AWKWARD**; ex-Brenda, **DAYS**, 2009)

It has not been an easy professional road for Nikki DeLoach, who first found success at the young age of 12 with Disney's **THE ALL NEW MICKEY MOUSE CLUB**, working alongside names like Britney Spears, Ryan Gosling, Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera and ex-boyfriend J.C. Chasez from 1993-95.

"I moved out to L.A. after **THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB** when I was 15 and worked for a couple of years straight," she recalls. "I did really well, actually, but it was lonely. My friends Justin Timberlake and J.C. were in Orlando doing [**NSYNC**], so I was down in Orlando every other month. I was actually there the weekend they signed their record contract. I really got to see them bloom and see how much fun they were having together. Then Justin's mom, Lynn, called me in and said, 'I want to put together a girl group [later named **Innosense**]. Do you want to help me do it?' I just jumped at the opportunity because when else would this opportunity present itself? I knew I'd regret it if I didn't do it."

The actress admits, however, that it wasn't the experience she bargained for. "My lawyer, my agent, my manager, everybody told me, 'This is such a huge mistake and you're going to commit career suicide if you do this,' but I did it anyway. They were right. I did, in a lot of ways, commit career suicide," DeLoach laughs in retrospect. "Signing with [manager] Lou Pearlman ended up being a disaster. I mean, he's in jail now! When I moved back out to L.A., I still had two years left on the record contract that I had to live out or else Pearlman would have gotten a piece of everything that I did. So, I went to community college [for two years], I was completely broke, had nothing and had to start all over."

And start over she did when she landed the role of Mary on

By
Beth
Wasko

Just The Facts

Birthday: September 9

Hails From: Waycross, GA

Resides In: Los Angeles, CA

A New Gig: "I wanted to learn the business side of producing. I had worked on sets for my entire life, so that part of it I knew like the back of my hand. A good friend of mine, Mickey Liddell, has a production company and I said, 'Do you mind if I come and intern?' Then a month or so into it, he lost one of his head creative executives, so he asked me if I wanted to work there. It was one of the greatest learning experiences of my life. I'm so grateful that Mickey gave that to me."

Girl To Girl: "I've been involved with an organization called **Girl Talk**, which is a peer mentoring program for middle school girls. They pair up high school girls with middle school girls, because what they've found is that a lot of the self-worth and body image issues start as early as middle school and it's such a tough age for girls to get through. I think if you can start working on those issues at a young age, then it can really go a long way as a girl and then as a woman to help have a healthy mental image of themselves." You can learn more about the national mentoring program at mygirltalk.org.

SOAP OPERA DIGEST

DAYS Gone By: "They're all such pros and gave me a lot of advice going into it. I'm glad they prepped me because I would never have known that it was going to move that fast, so I was really lucky and they were so kind and so easy to work with." Pictured: Lauren Boles (Clara), Ryan Alosio (Kyle) and DeLoach (Brenda).



PAUL SANCHEZ/ABC



Making It AWKWARD: "Kevin [Mike Faiola] and Lacey [DeLoach] are back at it, making their daughter [Jenna, Ashley Rickards] feel uncomfortable, and that's one thing I actually really love about this show is that I don't know how many TV shows really highlight two young parents that had their kid in high school who are still together and in love."

kidnappers. "Well, I have to make it known that I'm a huge soap opera fan," DeLoach smiles. "I grew up with my grandfather and my grandmother watching [soaps], so I still record Y&R every day! [Working on] DAYS just made me admire the actors that are doing soap work. It isn't easy and that is a skill set that you don't often get to learn as an actor. From being such a soap opera fan, it was really cool to actually be on a soap opera. It was altogether a great experience. Jay Kenneth Johnson [ex-Philip] and I worked on NORTH SHORE, so I got to see him whenever I was on DAYS and it was really fun to catch up and say hi because we all spent a year together in Hawaii."

DeLoach continued to audition for other shows and even filmed a couple of movies along the way, like *Love & Other Drugs* with Anne Hathaway and Jake Gyllenhaal and *Answer to Nothing* with Dane Cook, but it wasn't until she landed the role of Lacey on MTV's *AWKWARD* that she felt she struck gold, both personally and professionally. "I hit the jackpot as an actor," she enthuses. "I remember the first time I read the pilot script, I just instantly knew how special it was."

FOX's short-lived series *NORTH SHORE* in 2004. "It was one of the best working experiences I've ever had in my life," she beams. "NORTH SHORE was such a special thing. To be in Hawaii, which is one of my favorite places on Earth, was amazing. I did not experience island fever. People are running around with ukeleles and dancing and laughing and gambling behind the bushes. I did not want to come back. And even if it was just for a year, I'm so lucky to have been able to have the opportunity."

After a string of other prime-time appearances on shows like *CSI: NY*, *COLD CASE* and *WITHOUT A TRACE*, DeLoach landed her first daytime role in 2009 as DAYS OF OUR LIVES's Brenda, one of Ciara Brady's

MATTHEW CLARENCE/MTV

Whether or not an audience would find it, because you never know, [was the question]. And you never know, even if they do find it, if it's going to click."

The third season premiered last month, and the show has officially hit its stride, becoming Tuesday night's "most social television program" in the 12-34 demographic, according to www.tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com. "We're telling stories that are real and that are happening right now. We don't preach to the kids, we don't talk above kids. We talk right on their level and the show isn't an after-school special, where the music comes in at the end and there's this big lesson learned. There's always a lesson to be learned in *AWKWARD*, however, it is found just by telling the story. The audience finds their own message."

After watching Lacey go through some highs and lows in the past couple of seasons, DeLoach is excited to try something new with her alter ego. "In season three, Lacey is really trying to focus on being the best mom she can be. This is a Lacey we've never seen before. The first 10 episodes are really

showing the new relationship between Jenna and Lacey. But then in the back end [of the season], we really start to see the whole family dynamic struggle a bit as Jenna goes through a lot of changes. The audience will see Jenna unlike they've ever seen her before."

While filming *AWKWARD*, the actress also received her degree in both psychology and English from the University of Maryland. "It took so long and it's one of my proudest accomplishments because I was working full time while I was getting my degree, so every vacation I was on a beach with a psych book in my hand, trying to find wireless Internet in Starbucks so I could do my schoolwork online."

Although she currently has plenty to keep her busy, DeLoach is always open for a return to daytime. "I'm just throwing it out there that if *Y&R* wants me to come on, I'm available after June — that's when we'll wrap *AWKWARD*. If *DAYS* wants me to come back and kidnap a few kids, I'm down to do that, too," she winks. □

AWKWARD airs on Tuesdays at 10 p.m. ET on MTV.

Better Prepared

"A lot of preparation for [my career] came from *THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB* because in our last season, we were doing three live shows a week. That's a lot. Imagine doing three *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE*s a week! But also, beyond [that], you're doing skits, dance numbers and filming music videos. Plus, we did *EMERALD COVE*, which was a teen soap opera that we did within [MMC] and we worked six-day weeks. So, more than anything, MMC prepared me for anything that I would want to do in this business and gave me an incredible work ethic."

Star Power: Justin Timberlake, Britney Spears, Ryan Gosling and Christina Aguilera were DeLoach's MMC co-stars.



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ART+CONSCIOUS LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

ORIGIN SERIES: Different Artists // Same Questions // Powerful Answers

INTERVIEW: MARANDA PLEASANT

DEALING WITH ANXIETY, SELF WORTH, MEDITATION, COGNITIVE THERAPY AND GENERAL AWESOMENESS

INTERVIEW WITH NIKKI DELOACH, ACTRESS IN THE HIT SHOW AWKWARD

MARANDA PLEASANT: What makes you come alive?

Nikki DeLoach: I'm inspired by it all—the good and the not-so-good—because every experience is an opportunity for me to learn, grow, and become the best version of myself. I feel most alive when I'm surrounded by family and friends, and when I am working.

MP: What makes you feel vulnerable?

ND: I have a couple of what I call "bottoms"—fears or anxieties that when triggered can cause me to be vulnerable. Fear of failure, not being good enough, and abandonment are my main bottoms. However, they have diminished greatly over the years as I have really confronted those fears in order to work through them. My biggest vulnerability now is my son, Hadson. I am often plagued with fear: Is he ok? Is he safe? I'm in the process of trying to work through this fear. It's a hard one.

MP: If you could say something to everyone on the planet, what would it be?

ND: Be kind to yourself and to others. Treat others the way you would want to be treated. I was told that every day of my childhood.

MP: How do you handle emotional pain?

ND: It depends on the situation and how deep the pain cuts. I have a skill set that often helps me get through hurtful moments or experiences. However, sometimes when the pain cuts really deep, my normal go-to exercises just won't work. I have an amazing spiritual counselor. I use meditation a lot. Cognitive therapy has been very helpful for me. However, no matter what, I find that surrendering is essential. Finally, be kind to yourself and have a good support system.

MP: Tell me about your latest project.

ND: Right now I'm filming Season Four of *Awkward*. I play Lacey Hamilton, the over-the-top, well-meaning, but very well-intentioned mother of the lead, Jenna Hamilton. It's senior year, so Lacey is dealing with the impending empty nest and asking herself what she will do with the rest of her life. I also just became an expert blogger for a website called *SheKnows*. My first blog goes up this month. On our hiatus I'm doing an action/thriller indie, which should be a lot of fun.

MP: How do you keep your center in the middle of chaos? Do you have a daily routine?

ND: Meditation has really helped with keeping my center. Also, I cannot stress the importance of pausing to take a few deep breaths throughout the day. It's simple and effective. Going for a walk is always helpful for me. I also love gratitude exercises. Reminding myself of all that I have to be thankful for really helps ground me and keeps me from tipping over into that negative place.

MP: What truth do you know for sure?

ND: That I am loved. ☺

Nikki is from Blackshear, GA. Her first big professional job was The Mickey Mouse Club. After that, she focused acting for several years, until she decided to pursue music. After a stint in the music business, she returned to acting. For the last ten years, she's been in L.A., working in film and television as an actor. Along the way, she got a degree, became a certified acting coach, and spent a year as a creative executive at a production company. "Most importantly," she says, "I'm happy." You can check out Nikki's past on-mentee issues at SheKnows.com

HAIRSHOW



Prep Steps for Summer

The changing seasons can really take a toll on your hair, making it look and feel dull. Maria Russo, owner & lead stylist of Salon Maria Russo in Boston, offers up 3 ways to get your locks in tip-top shape for the sunny season.

1. Incorporate a glass, serum like Kerastase Nutrition Serum. Once it's in your hair, it helps to help brighten up your color and remove some of the moisture loss during the cold, dry winter months.

2. Clean your brushes and combs. Over time, they collect buildup and bacteria, which will only make your hair with every use. Begin by removing dead hair, then soak tools in a mixture of hot soapy water and let them soak overnight, wash with warm water and let dry.

3. To give your hair a boost, take a break from washing and go as long as possible. However, if you can't wait, use dry shampoo. If you don't want to blow-dry, you should still apply a little heat, as moisture and heat improve a UV protectant.



LOVE HER LOOK: Awkward's Nikki DeLoach

We chatted with the MTV actress to get the lowdown on her off-screen tress routine.

The actress has her hair cut and colored regularly and is so not a salon snob—she goes to a Burbank-area barber shop! Deep conditioning, avoiding heat styling and limiting shampooing to every 2-3 days help her locks stay healthy. “Dry shampoo has saved the lives of women—including me!” Her faves are Klorane, Dove and Sexy Hair. “I just wash my bangs and use dry shampoo on the rest of my hair.”

The TV star's other styling secret: Rita Hazan Root Concealer in light brown, which she uses to extend the amount of time between trips to the salon for full-color touchups. As for length, the longer, the better: “I keep it long because my husband likes long hair and I can do a lot more with it.”

PHOTOGRAPHER: RICK H PHOTOGRAPHY; HAIRMAKEUP: ALISON NOBLE; MAKE: RETOUCHING: DANNY HERNANDEZ

Hue's News

Celebrity Colorist Michael Corallo, the man behind some of the most iconic looks in Hollywood—including Jennifer Aniston since the beginning of her career on *Friends*—has the inside scoop on getting your color ready for the warmer months ahead.

OVERALL: Instead of a—women will be shying away from extreme hair color and will be looking for shades that enhance their natural beauty.

BLONDES: will be seen with an overall golden tone and copper highlights that add just the right amount of shimmer and a healthy glow.

BRUNETTES: will go a shade or two darker with lots of Auburn. Be it a glow or highlights. The reason? Dark, dark colors can easily feel flat and are easily washed.

RED: is the only color that will see a change with the change of season—they'll go toward a dark auburn-orange, which will totally pop!

Color and hair are subject to change. This is a general guide only. All colors are subject to change.



NIKKI DELOACH WHAT I'M WATCHING

"I love 'Veep.' Julia Louis-Dreyfus is a queen. I love everything she does, but especially 'Veep.' I've seen every episode of the show probably five times! It's so brilliant and all of the characters/actors are amazing on that show. One of my favorite things about it is they never break character even when they don't have a line."

— DeLoach (right) stars in the Hallmark Channel movie "Love Takes Flight."



TV Monday

TOUCHING TRIBUTE

'Young and the Restless' says farewell to Kristoff St. John



Kristoff St. John, right: Monday's tribute to (from left) Bryton James, Christel Khalil and Shemar Moore.

By ROBERT RORKE

THE cast and crew of "The Young and the Restless" will pay tribute Monday to late cast member Kristoff St. John, who played Neil Winters on the CBS soap for 28 years. Kristoff died suddenly of hypertrophic heart failure on Feb. 3 at the age of 52.

"Y&R" will remember St. John in an hourlong episode (12:30-1:30 p.m.) recalling his personality and impact on the long-running soap.

Actress Christel Khalil, who plays Neil's daughter Lily Winters — and who appears on the tribute — says she heard the news about St. John when she returned home from a Super Bowl party. The last time she saw him was on the show's set. "It was all very normal," says Khalil, 31. "We had some laughs. Like every other day."

Because soaps tape five episodes per week, their large casts spend more time together than actors on other TV series and their bond is very deep. Khalil can still remember her screen test with St. John when she auditioned for the role of Lily. She was 14.

"It was down to me and four other girls. He came into our rooms to run lines and give us pointers," Khalil says. "I didn't realize how special that was."

When I had my actual screen test, I had the best audition in my life. I attributed it to Kristoff."

There were already several weeks worth of shows in the can when St. John died, but co-executive producer Josh Griffith had to write his star out of the show and celebrate his legacy with a tribute.

"The shows with Neil's death needed to come fairly soon after the news hit. We dedicated an entire week [of April episodes] to focus on that," he says. "The ramifications throughout [the series' fictitious location of] Genoa City affected everyone. We had everyone react to the shocking news and the aftermath."

On Monday's tribute, fans will see longtime stars of the show such as Eileen Davidson and Jess Walton as well as Michelle Morgan and St. John's former co-stars Victoria Rowell and Shemar Moore, who filmed two "Y&R" episodes in one day so he could get back to work on the prime-time series "S.W.A.T."

"Shemar came in at 7 in the morning and was here until midnight," Griffith says. "Everybody was on board. The hours were grueling but on top of that there was the emotion of being so close to [St. John]. It was draining." Quickly producing post-mortem episodes for a departed cast member was something Griffith had done before — when Jeanne Cooper, who played Katherine Chancellor, died at age 84 in May 2013. "She was a horse right up to the end," he says. "She worked the week before [she died]. We knew she had some issues, but there was nothing that indicated she had little time left. It was a surprise, but not a shock like Kristoff."

Griffith worked closely with the "Y&R" post-production team to match appropriate footage with cast reminiscences of working with St. John on the set of the show. "It's a very intimate, informal gathering of his colleagues," he says.

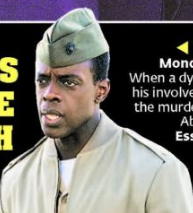
"In many ways, it was kind of their memorial service and quite cathartic for them. They could work through their grief by grieving for his character."

Griffith has already written scenes where several characters on the show are impacted by Neil's will.

"I knew that Kristoff would be very angry if I didn't move story forward with his death," he says.



WHAT'S ON THE WATCH LIST



THE CODE

Monday, 9 p.m., CBS
When a dying Marine confesses his involvement in covering up the murder of an Iraqi civilian, Abe and Trey (Ato Essandoh) are assigned to prosecute the accused killer, who's a sitting US congressman.

THE BILLBOARD MUSIC AWARDS

Wednesday, 8 p.m., NBC
Kelly Clarkson hosts the annual awards show, which will feature performances from artists including Taylor Swift, Paula Abdul, Halsey and Jonas Brothers.



STATION 19

Thursday, 9 p.m., ABC
A special crossover event with "Grey's Anatomy" unfolds as a deadly blaze inside a coffee beanery lands a member of Station 19 in Grey Sloan Hospital, leaving the future uncertain in the face of a life-threatening situation. Barrett Doss co-stars.





The Blackshear Times • Wednesday, July 17, 2013 • Page 5

Busy year for Nikki DeLoach has more to come for actress

Blackshear's own juggles television and film roles while starring as mother in MTV hit comedy 'Awkward'

It's been an eventful year on screen so far for Blackshear's Nikki DeLoach — and there's still plenty to look forward to before the end of 2013.

The actress spoke *The Times* last week about her upcoming work on the critically-acclaimed MTV comedy, "Awkward," and other projects while back home visiting family.

DeLoach stars as Lacey Hamilton, the young, well-intended — but sometimes misguided — mother of the show's focus, the now 16-year-old Jenna. The Hamiltons have endured challenges, sometimes stumbling, in their respective lives, but have been there for each other. A preview of the second half of the show's third season indicates both will have to cope with upheaval caused by Jenna's decision-making, particularly when it comes to relationships.

DeLoach says the humor fans love will remain, though the show will follow Jenna going through what other teens experience in being faced with choices — and sometimes making bad ones.

"This season we're really trying to focus on Lacey becoming the mother she never had," says DeLoach. She says her character must also become the mother she has yet to be for her own daughter. "She's really going to have to exercise muscles she's never used before."

DeLoach says her character will have to break away from being more of a friend to her daughter — or "parenting" as she describes it — and practice tough love as a mother.

"It's going to put more strain on their relationship."

DeLoach says it's a thrill

to be part of a show mixing both comedy and drama. Viewers must agree. The current season's premiere in April was rated the top cable series of the day. "Awkward" also received the People's Choice Award for Favorite Cable TV Comedy earlier this year.

"That was such a blessing and gift from our audience and fans," DeLoach says, citing the show's buzz from viewer word-of-mouth and media attention.



* Nikki DeLoach

"The show wouldn't be what it is without our audience."

With "Awkward" on mid-season hiatus, DeLoach showed another part of her range with a May guest appearance on "CSI." She says she was welcomed by the crew of the long-running TV crime drama.

"It was just the nicest group of people."

DeLoach played Heather Conner, described by the actress as a Type A personality who gets wrapped up in a drug ring. The role gave DeLoach and show writers a chance to showcase a surprise demise in

the sometimes hushed tones of an interrogation scene.

"She actually [overdoses] in the interrogation room," she says. "You get to really have fun with a character type."

DeLoach also shared screen time with veteran actor Willem Dafoe in the short film, "Saving Norman," one of three featured projects of the Jameson First Shot film competition.

Along with acting, the 33-year-old DeLoach will be taking on a new role personally as a first-time mother in about three months. She says the journey through motherhood has been a "wild experience."

"Hate off to every mother out there," she says. "It's not easy."

The actress and crew of "Awkward" had to put in extra thought taping the last half of the season, working angles to cover her ever-showing pregnancy.

"We're trying to hide it in every episode," DeLoach says with a laugh.

The last 10 episodes of the third season of "Awkward" are set to premiere in October.

* Nikki is the daughter of David and Terri DeLoach of Blackshear. She is married to Ryan Goodell.

Nikki began her entertainment career at age 8 and by 12 years old joined "The Mickey Mouse Club" along with other budding stars such as Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears and Ryan Gosling. She went on to work as a recording artist and appear in numerous television and film roles.

You can keep up with Nikki's career on Twitter by following @nikkideLoach.

RUNWAY

M A G A Z I N E

Nikki DeLoach



Blazer : Barrus London
Pant : LEXI
Boot : TOPSHOP

You looked amazing for today's shoot, tell us about your favorite part of the day?

My favorite part of the day was getting to know everyone here at Runway and in the industry. We laughed a lot and listened to some great music. I got to get dressed up in really pretty things and not have spit up on my shoulder from my child. It was great.

Whom do you wear on the red carpet?

I recently wore two dresses by Bronx and Banco to the Children's Hospital Los Angeles Gala and the Autism Speaks Into the Blue Gala. I didn't even know they were both the same designer when I pulled the dresses, so I obviously have a thing for them. I also love Delphine Manivet, she made me a jumper for the premiere of a French movie I was in called "Hollywoo". And I also wore another gown of hers to the People's Choice Awards, she is one of my favorite designers.

What is your normal style? Do you have to dress up a lot?

Jeans and t-shirts and a great pair of loafers. I'm also really into kicks or cool tennies. I love throwing on a nice blazer or comfy sweater on top. I'm a minimalist.

What do you do to relax?

Because I'm a mother of two, being at home has become a lot of work. So I've reached a point in my life where being at work is relaxing, all I have to do is sit and have someone else do my hair and makeup. They also feed you. On days when I'm acting I just have to remember my lines, whereas producing is a little tougher. I love to work out, that's usually my way to unwind, although lately I haven't been able to work out as much as I would like. I also love to read and I really love to watch TV.

Photographer: Sid Rane
@sidranephoto

Stylist: Madison Dixon
@madisondixonstylist

Hair/Makeup Artist: Octavio Solis
@octaviostyle

RUNWAY ENTERTAINMENT

NIKKI DELOACH

73





Gown : BronxandBanco
Sandal Heels : HPC



FILM | TV



Photographer: Inda Reid

ACTOR, WRITER, DIRECTOR NIKKI DELOACH ON OBSTACLES, THE NOW, AND HER SUPERPOWER

Nikki DeLoach, born in a small town in South Georgia, always knew she wanted to be an entertainer. She started dancing at the age of three, eventually adding singing, modeling, and acting to her repertoire. All her hard work paid off when, at the age of 12, she became a member of *The Mickey Mouse Club* (MMC), alongside Justin Timberlake, Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, and Ryan Gosling. After MMC, DeLoach spent several years in Los Angeles pursuing acting. She landed a starring role opposite Mark Wahlberg and Bill Paxton in the feature film *Traveller*, and the TV series *Misery Loves Company*. She also played Anthony LaPaglia's daughter in the television movie *Never Give Up: The Jimmy V Story*. In 1997, DeLoach put her acting career on hold to enter the world of pop music, signing with RCA and BMG Records to become part of the girl group Innosense. When the group disbanded in 2003, DeLoach returned to Hollywood, enjoying a successful and diverse acting career.

DeLoach's recent credits include her starring role on MTV's critically acclaimed series, *Awkward*, where she was considered one of television's "hottest moms" as Lacey Hamilton. DeLoach also guest starred on some of TV's biggest hit shows, including *NCIS*, *Criminal Minds*, *CSI*, *CSI: NY*, *Cold Case*, *Mad Men* and *Without a Trace*, among many others. She was also a series regular on the popular show *North Shore*. Her films include *Love & Other Drugs*, *Flying Lessons*, opposite Maggie Grace and Hal Holbrook, and the French comedy *Hollywood*.

Hallmark Channel viewers will also recognize DeLoach from her starring roles in the network's original movies *The Perfect Catch*, *Christmas Land*, *A Dream of Christmas*, *Truly, Madly, Sweetly*, and *Love Takes Flight*. She also developed, executive produced, and starred in *Reunited at Christmas*, which premiered on the network last November. DeLoach is set to return to the Hallmark Channel in the

upcoming Christmas movie *Two Turtle Doves*, opposite Michael Rady.

Outside of acting, DeLoach is dedicated to sharing her passions and ideas with others. She cofounded What We Are, a community for women that celebrates their unfiltered selves. She is also a passionate supporter and spokesperson for Children's Hospital Los Angeles and The Alzheimer's Association. DeLoach shares her love for acting by coaching at the renowned Warner Loughlin Studios.

RAINE: Can you describe your experiences and how they helped fine-tune your craft?

DELOACH: I would say that everything I've experienced in my life helped me fine-tune my craft. You learn something new at every job you say yes to. However, there were a few experiences that really helped me take it to the next level. *The Mickey Mouse*

Club gave me a strong education and foundation for any creative path I want to explore, whether that be acting, music, writing, or directing. It also taught me a lot about having a good work ethic, being a team player, and how the work should feel when you are doing it. Something else that became a game changer for me was becoming a teacher. I started teaching acting at Warner Loughlin Studios when I was 29. I had fallen in love with Warner's technique and had been a student there for many years. When you are responsible for teaching others, you really start to own your skill set. You are working that muscle, constantly. It was instrumental for my growth not only as an actor, but also as a writer and director.

RAINE: What's been a funny behind-the-scenes moment that you could share?

DELOACH: We had a lot of fun on *Awkward*. It was this gem of a show that was on MTV. The kids were always pulling pranks on everyone. Several times, I would leave set and open the door to my car only to find it filled with balloons.

RAINE: Knowing what you know now, what advice would you have given yourself five years ago?

DELOACH: In the last five years, I've had two children, so a lot has changed for me. My second son was born with multiple heart defects and has had three heart surgeries thus far. He's not two yet. If that doesn't shift your life perspective, nothing will. There are so many things I would tell myself—calm down, stop worrying, nothing is going to look like you want it to so just surrender. I could go on. The biggest thing that I now understand, after experiencing a life and death situation, is that it's not that important: the red carpets, the photo shoots, the auditions, the job. It's a great job—a fun job, a lovely job—but it's just a job. We place so much importance on “making it” in this industry. People's self-worth and self-love is often dependent on their success or how this business sees them. And it's really unfortunate. YOU are important, no matter what you do or how much money you make or how many Instagram followers you have. I know what actually matters now. My baby is alive and thriving. My oldest son is starting kindergarten and is healthy and happy. My husband and I love each other more now than ever. I have a strong community of friends and family around me that I love. And I take every opportunity to give back and help others. These are the important things. Everything else is just going on top of a really delightful cake.

RAINE: If someone asked you how they could stimulate their creativity, what advice would you give?

DELOACH: Get out of your head and get out of your own way. Actors can get tunnel vision where the only thing we think about, talk about, or obsess over is our career. I found that to be exhausting, draining, narcissistic, and essentially not helpful in terms of stimulating your creative self. Instead, live an interesting life. Do things that bring you joy, pleasure, and adventure. Do things for others. Being a person of service and giving back is one of my favorite ways of kickstarting my creativity.

RAINE: What three traits do you feel are most needed to pursue entrepreneurship?

DELOACH: Vision/creativity, leadership, work ethic.

RAINE: Have you ever faced the issue of burnout in your career? If so, how did you overcome it?

DELOACH: YES! Sometimes the pursuit of your dreams wears you down. At that point, it's time to take a beat and heal your creative wound. I really believe it's easier to overcome these moments when you have a full life outside of the thing you are in pursuit of. I have kids, my husband, family, and friends. I work with Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and The Alzheimer's Association. I teach. I write. I co-founded a site for women called What We Are. The no's are what created the entrepreneur inside of me. Also, I had a huge realization after Bennett's first heart surgery; it can be summed up in this Alfred D'Souza quote:

“For a long time it had seemed to me that life was about to begin—real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to be got through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid, then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life.” Life can be hard and painful—sometimes, extraordinarily painful. We can keep telling ourselves that life can finally begin once we get (fill in the blank). Trust me when I say this: Don't miss all the greatness, beauty, and blessings that life is giving you right now—in your obstacles. If you can allow yourself to stay open through the incredible and the painful, that is where you grow. That is where all the miracles and magic exist. When the burnout comes, answer it with openness. You'll know what you need to do.

RAINE: Name your top three hacks for battling the loneliness of entrepreneurship.

DELOACH: I have two, actually.

1. Collaborate. I love being on a team. So, I collaborate as much as possible.
2. Get real and get vulnerable—with yourself, with others. Meditate. Exercise. Get that dopamine flowing. Reach out to a friend and talk about what you are really feeling. All of these things.

RAINE: What wellness tips do you swear by?

DELOACH: Sleep. Sleep. And more sleep. Lifting weights (big fan). Spinning. Meditation. I love to juice. And I am a big advocate of eating protein and good fats. These are the things that work for me.

RAINE: What did you want to be when you grew up? Has this stayed the same or changed throughout the years?

DELOACH: I wanted to be a storyteller. I thank God every day that I grew up to do the thing that I love. It has been a very long road. Lots of Ramen Noodles. Seriously, I wake up every day and give thanks that I get to pay my bills doing the thing that I dreamed about as a child.

RAINE: What major project coming up are you most excited about?

DELOACH: I have another wonderful Christmas movie called *Two Turtle Doves* that I did for Hallmark coming out later this year. So stay tuned for that.

RAINE: Who have been the most memorable people you have worked alongside and why?

DELOACH: My teacher on *The Mickey Mouse Club*, Mr. Chuck Yarger, was one of the most influential people in my life. He could make any subject exciting. He encouraged my curiosity and made me feel like there was a whole world out there waiting for me to discover it. I did a movie with Bill Paxton when I was 16. He was kind, funny, grounded, and committed. He taught me that as the lead of a movie (or anything), you have this beautiful opportunity to set the tone for everyone's experience. Also, I have to give my Hallmark family a huge shout-out. They have taken such great care of my family and me. I have a blast working for them. It is very refreshing to be a part of a network that treats you with respect and kindness.

RAINE: What are your superpowers? How have they helped you excel?

DELOACH: Vulnerability is my superpower—openness in my superpower. We talk about that all the time on our site, What We Are. It takes great courage and it took me a long time to get there. And now that I am there, I find it to be a true strength of character. Also, being this way changed my work.

RAINE: Talk about how technology changed your industry for newcomers?

DELOACH: I think that it greatly changed my industry in a positive as well as negative way. How many followers people have on Instagram actually influences casting decisions, which is bananas. I am a purist in the sense that I feel like you should hire the best person for the job, and I say that as a producer as well. The way in which technology has positively impacted our industry is that there are so many different and more varied ways for people to produce content. If you have an iPhone and an idea, you can create something. I love that. It removes the “gate keepers”—the people who usually decide if you get an opportunity to bring something to life.

RAINE: Are there any plans to partner with a major celebrity, brand or organization in the future?

DELOACH: Right now, I just want to be the spokesperson for OxiClean. I have two kids. OxiClean is life. I really feel like they need to make my family the face of the brand. I don't know anyone messier than my family.

RAINE: What is the biggest problem that creatives face today and how would you solve it?

DELOACH: People see something that was successful and try to do the same thing hoping to be just as successful. Why not do something different? Just like each and every human being is different, every creative idea is different—it has a pulse.

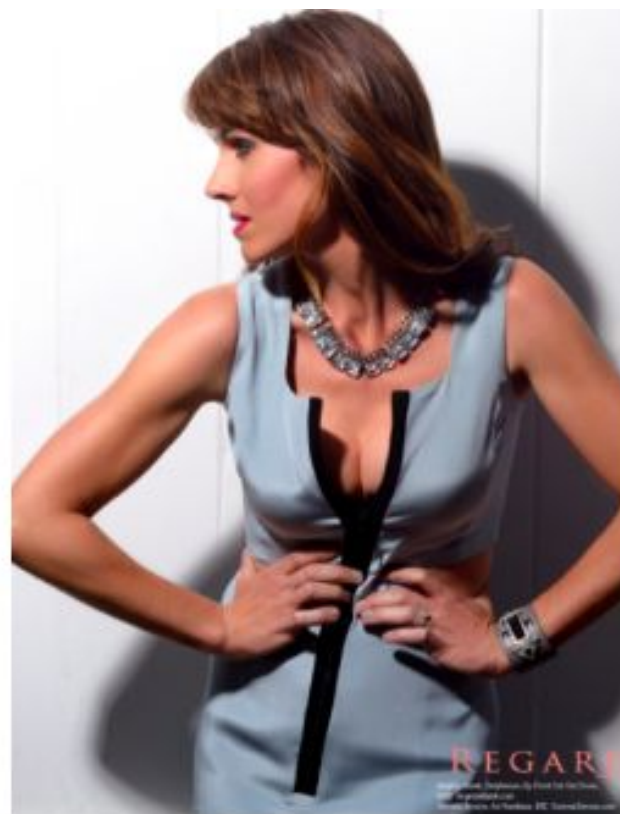
REGARD

MAGAZINE









Let's get this out of the way first, because we have to! You were in the Mickey Mouse Club with Justin Timberlake? WHAT? Tell us everything!

It was a dream come true. I was a kid who was getting to do what I loved to do most in the world. The show was such a gift and truly the most incredible training ground for anything I would ever want to do in the entertainment industry. I was also surrounded by peers who felt the same way in regards to their love of performing. Yes, Justin was one of those peers. He is a very private person and we wouldn't be friends as long as we have if I was a person who dished on my friends. I will just say that I am so proud of all that he has accomplished. He is one of the most hard-working people I know. Oh, and buy his new album. It's fantastic.

You started out in the Mickey Mouse Club, and then you went to LA to try acting but ended up in a girl group. How did that happen and how did you make your way back to acting?

I was actually working a lot when I first moved out to L.A. after the MMC. I was 15 years old and very fortunate. When Lynn Harless (Justin's mom) called to ask if I wanted to start a girl group with her, the dreamer in me screamed "YES!" I missed music and felt like if I didn't take advantage of the opportunity I would always regret it. Plus, I was seeing what Justin and J.C. were doing with 'NSYNC and a big part of me wanted to be involved in something like that. My reps said I was making a huge mistake with my acting career taking off the way it was. They were right in so many ways. However, I met my husband while in the music business. So, as hard as that experience was, it was worth it because of him. I knew I would always go back to acting because I loved it so much. After the music business, I moved back out to L.A. and started over.

Being that you can sing, will there be a musical project in the future or have you put that behind you completely?

I would love to do music again. It would have to be in the most organic way...a role in a movie or a TV show that involves singing, a stage musical, or sitting down with friends and becoming inspired to play together. I would actually give anything to do a musical! I have been in love with them since I was a child. I am obsessed.

You currently play Lacey Hamilton on the hit MTV series, *Awkward*. What appealed to you most about Lacey?

She is actually a very complicated, nuanced character. Yes, she is outrageous, self-centered, and incredibly inappropriate at times. Ultimately, though, Lacey is like every other mother out there...she loves and wants the best for her kid. Her heart is always in the right place. Lacey's skill set, however, is under-developed. Honestly, this character scared me so much when I first read the pilot, not only because of her complexity, but because she is so vastly different from myself. However, I had been yearning for a challenge. She came along at the perfect time.

What can the fans expect in the new season of *Awkward*? Will Lacey and Kevin stay together or do they have more obstacles coming up?

Lacey and Kevin are as strong as ever. They will have to be because Jenna really deals with some heavy issues in Season 3 and will need her parents. That is all I can give away I am afraid. I hate when Lacey and Kevin fight. However, they are very, very good at making up...if you are picking up what I am putting down.

You look chic and edgy in your *REGARD* editorial shoot wearing designs by Angelys Balek. Who are your go-to red carpet designers and what brands would we find in your personal wardrobe?

Lately, I've been wearing a lot of New York designers like Novis and Marissa Webb for red carpets and events. Marissa Webb can definitely be found in my closet.

You have a big fan base, how important is it for you to stay connected with your fans on Twitter and other social media platforms?

It is incredibly important to stay connected with fans on social media. Let's use *Awkward* as an example of the power of social media via fans. Our audience found the show and made it a success. We all felt like the show was great, but that doesn't always translate to ratings. We would live tweet every episode and try to respond to every fan tweet or Facebook message possible. Our fans spread the word about *Awkward*... along with the critics. They can make or break you, and luckily, they made us. We are so grateful to our fans and the critics for their passionate use of social media on behalf of our little engine that could.

We look forward to the new season of *Awkward*, can you tell us what other projects you have coming up?

I just wrapped a short where I am playing opposite Willem Defoe. Kevin Spacey's production company Trigger Street Productions is producing it. I will be pinching myself for a long time after getting to work with Willem. He is truly the most wonderful actor and person. I also did a movie called *HUNTED*, in January, right before Season 3 began shooting. It is a horror movie with a very unique premise. I worked opposite Josh Stewart who is a dream—a good-ole country boy with a heck-of-a-lot of talent. Then, I have an episode of *CSI* airing May 1st.

Twitter: @NikkiDeLoach

Facebook: Nikki DeLoach

Website: www.whosay.com/NikkiDeLoach



Parade

Exclusive Look: Nikki DeLoach Talks Hallmark Hall of Fame's *Love Takes Flight*, Brain Health and Chaos



Hallmark Hall of Fame presentations have been gracing the airwaves for almost seven decades. How apropos is it that the channel known for its holiday fare premiered its first Hallmark Hall of Fame with *Amahl and the Night Visitor* on December 24, 1951?

Love Takes Flight, the newest Hallmark Hall of Fame movie, premieres Saturday, April 27 at 8 p.m. ET on Hallmark Channel. It stars **Nikki DeLoach** and **Jeff Hephner** as Dr. Lizzie Beaman and Charley Allen, respectively.

Lizzie is a single mother and hospital administrator tasked with assembling and creating the kind of world-class hospital that attracts cases from around the globe. A former OB/GYN, Lizzie left medicine for administration when her 5-year-old daughter, Quinn (**Skylar Olivia Flanagan**) became ill. Lizzie prefers order over chaos and plans over spontaneity. When new EMS pilot, Charley Allen comes into their lives and challenges all the constrictions Lizzie places on herself, Lizzie gets into a bit of a tizzy. Charley, in turn, learns about the patience it takes to nurture relationships, especially the one between himself and his father.

DeLoach sat down with Parade.com to talk about the film.

Lizzie is afraid of heights/flying. What are you afraid of?

After going through two open heart surgeries with my youngest son, I am not afraid of anything anymore—except, of course, the health and safety of my kids being threatened in some way. Every other fear I ever had fell away after that because I experienced a true life or death situation. Now, I really know what it's like to look your worst fear in the eye.

Lizzie prefers order over chaos. Which do you prefer?

Order, for sure!

Would you rather fly or stay grounded?

Stay grounded. Flying is A LOT of work. Especially with two kids.

What drew you to this project?

I had already heard of the story that inspired this movie. It was so beautiful and worthy of people's attention. So, to be a small part of that was a big YES for me. Secondly, to have the opportunity to be a part of a Hallmark Hall of Fame movie is something I would never pass up. It is a real honor. Hallmark Hall of Fame is the most award-winning and longest-running series in the history of television. Then, to find out that my dear friend **Steven Monroe** was directing this was so exciting. We've done five movies together, but never a Hall of Fame. It was a real treat to share this with him and also the incomparable **Barbara Niven**, who I truly love.

The film takes place and filmed in Savannah, Georgia and you were born in Georgia. Can you give me memory of growing up in Georgia? Or something that reminds you of Georgia?

I cannot believe I was so fortunate to be able to do back-to-back movies in Savannah, which is 90 minutes from my hometown and family. What a dream! I have so many incredible memories of growing up in Georgia.

Riding four-wheelers, oyster roasts, playing basketball and softball, all the family time, picking peanuts and pecans with my dad, church, adventuring outside with my sister and friends until dark... I could go on and on. Blackshear, Georgia is truly a special place.

What was the last show you binge watched?

I just re-watched all seasons of *Veep* in prep for season 7. I am obsessed with **Julia Louis-Dreyfus**. She's comedic royalty.

What movie can you watch over and over again?

Funny Girl.

What was the last book you read?

My friend **Lydia Fitzpatrick** recently released *Lights All Night Long: A Novel*. She's so brilliant. Everyone should read her work.

Who was your first celebrity crush?

Harrison Ford.

Who is your current celebrity crush?

Kyle Chandler.

You're at craft services on set. What do you reach for?

That's changed a lot for me. I used to eat anything and everything I could get my hands on. However, after my dad's diagnosis of *Pick's disease*, I really changed my eating habits. I now eat for brain health, for all over health. So, now, I bring my own snacks. So boring, right?!

Read the interview here:

<https://parade.com/871790/rielyhaven/exclusive-look-nikki-delouch-talks-at-hallmark-hall-of-fames-love-takes-flight-brain-health-and-chaos/>



Nikki DeLoach on How 'Reunited at Christmas' Is Different From Other Hallmark Holiday Movies

Q&A



"I really wants fans' hearts to be warmed," says Nikki DeLoach of her new Hallmark holiday movie, *Reunited at Christmas*, which follows her character Samantha's bumpy journey back home.

Before Samantha's beloved grandmother passed away, she organized a way to get everyone she loves together during the holidays to remind them about the "importance of family, love and second chances."

"I want people to take away that there are many different types of the families out there," DeLoach tells TV Insider. In the movie, we'll see a family who has gone through a divorce, which has caused Samantha to doubt whether marriage is right for her.

Then, her boyfriend, Simon (Mike Faiola), proposes, which has her even more confused about how she truly feels about relationships. DeLoach previewed what's to come from the holiday flick, including the deeper meaning and why it was a risk for Hallmark.

You're acting and executive producing... how was it balancing those jobs?

Nikki DeLoach: It was definitely more challenging than just showing up and learning my lines, but it's a challenge that I really enjoy. My days are filled with me bouncing in and out of different roles and I love it. I like to lay my head down at the end of the day and feel like I accomplished a lot. And working with Hallmark was great because I really understand their brand.

What do you think sets *Reunited at Christmas* apart from other holiday movies?

This is a little bit of a different movie for Hallmark. You're dealing with a family that gone through a divorce and they're all coming back together for the holidays.

You're also dealing with a character who's been hurt in the past and isn't sure she's ready to get married right now. I love how real that is and it speaks to a huge percentage of women who also feel that way. I also loved that she's a writer, a storyteller. It teaches us how to love and be compassionate and have empathy for others.



I also liked how the movie depicts the importance of multigenerational relationships.

That was such a big thing for me. When I pitched this idea, I wanted to have an ensemble cast and for them to be highlighted, not just the man and woman falling in love. I felt it was really important because it speaks to the entire family. There's somebody for everybody to relate to.

The cast was really excited as well because they usually only get a sentence here or a word there. They're [usually] in service of that lead story line and now they get their own story lines.

The mother and father story line is actually my favorite of the movie. I love that they are two people who did get divorced and now they're kind of being brought back together. What does it look like when a family's gone through that? What does it look like to reimagine what the holidays could be?

Was it hard to film those proposal rejection scenes?

Yes! Because you have to be specific about the tone. You can't have the audience hate you, so you have to be authentic and do it with a lot of heart and a lot of love.

The Christmas decorating in this movie is next level. How long did it take to decorate the main home featured?

If you only knew! That took so long. We managed to find this gorgeous house but we underestimated how large the property was because we had to blanket the whole thing with snow. There was one day we had to wait three hours for them to blanket a part of the property with snow. But if you look at the final product, wasn't it worth it?

This movie is all about passing on holiday traditions, what's a holiday tradition you carry on?

My whole family lives together on a farm in Georgia. So I travel to Georgia and spend Christmas with them.

I also make a photo album every year. I take pictures throughout the holidays and then make a photo album and write a letter to the family. I create a theme, write quotes, if we had any new additions to the family, and then I give it everyone the following year as a Christmas gift and we all sit around the look at the photos from the previous year just to remind ourselves of all the gifts we have.



Read the interview here:

<https://www.tvinsider.com/732525/nikki-deload-reunited-at-christmas-hallmark-channel/>

Southern Living

Hallmark Star Nikki DeLoach's Thanksgiving Sweet Potato Casserole



Georgia native and star of many of our favorite [Hallmark Christmas movies](#), including the new *Two Turtle Doves* that is part of the [10th Annual Countdown to Christmas celebration](#), shared exclusively with *Southern Living* her family's sweet potato casserole recipe:

Ever since I can remember, my family has eaten this sweet potato casserole recipe every Thanksgiving and Christmas. It wouldn't be the holidays without it! I love the combination of sweet and salty, fluffy and crunchy. My entire family lives on our family farm in South Georgia. Each house is nestled between its own pecan orchard. There is something so special about farm to table. I have so many great memories of picking up pecans with my dad. The experience just makes each and every bite more delicious.

Ingredients

- 6 sweet potatoes
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup milk (2% or whole)
- 1/2 cup margarine
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 to 1 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1/3 cup self-rising flour
- 1/3 cup melted margarine for topping

How to Make It

Step 1 Bake the sweet potatoes at 400 degrees until tender. (About one hour) Let cool. Remove skins.

Step 2 Mash the sweet potatoes and mix with sugar, eggs, vanilla, milk, margarine. Place in a buttered casserole dish.

Step 3 For topping, mix brown sugar, pecans, flour, and melted margarine together and sprinkle evenly on top of the sweet potato mixture.

Step 4 Bake casserole at 350 degrees for approximately 30 minutes or until nicely browned.

Read the recipe here:

<https://www.southernliving.com/recipes/nikki-deload-sweet-potato-casserole-recipe-pe-can-topping>



Hallmark's 'Love Takes Flight' Was Filmed in a Gorgeous Southern Town You Can Visit

As an actress, Nikki DeLoach has to be prepared to spend a considerable amount of time away from her family. But when the mother-of-two signed up for Hallmark's *Love Takes Flight*, she was actually about as close to her loved ones as she could get. The movie, which premieres on Saturday, April 27, was filmed in Savannah, Georgia, and is very close to where the Hallmark star grew up.

"I was born and raised about an hour and a half from Savannah, in a small town called Blackshear, Georgia. And my family still lives there, they all live on a farm," Nikki tells *CountryLiving.com* in an exclusive interview. Nikki, who plays OB-GYN turned COO Dr. Lizzie Beauman, says her relatives were even able to visit while she was on set. "I really got in some family time, which was amazing. Absolutely amazing," she says.

Interestingly enough, *Love Takes Flight* was not only filmed in the southern city, but it actually takes place in the Hostess City of the South. Inspired by a true story, the movie shows the life of Lizzie, a divorced single parent who goes from friendly to falling head-over-heels for Charley Allen, (played by actor Jeff Hephner) the new EMS pilot at St. Carmen's Hospital where she works.

Georgians will definitely recognize a handful of places featured in the film, including the quaint Savannah Historic District that "is the heart of one of the most beautiful cities in the world," according to the website. Viewers will also get to see the breathtaking Wormsloe Historic Site, which was once the estate of Noble Jones, one of Georgia's colonial founders.



Like most Hallmark movies, *Love Takes Flight* is a story about love—but there's much more to the narrative than that, Nikki notes. "It's a really beautiful story. It's got a lot of nuance to it. It's bigger than just a romance," she says. "I really hope people like it."

And we're sure they will! Tune into watch Nikki in *Love Takes Flight* Saturday, April 27 at 9 p.m. EST on Hallmark.

Read the interview here:

<https://www.countryliving.com/life/entertainment/a27258244/hallmark-love-takes-flight-filming-location/>

backstage★



The following Career Dispatches essay was written by [Nikki DeLoach](#), previously of MTV's "Awkward" and who can currently be seen starring in the Hallmark Hall of Fame movie "Love Takes Flight."

Be prepared.

Be the hardest working person in the room.

Stay humble.

Don't take rejection personally.

Have fun.

Throw your sides in the trash after an audition.

Be kind to the crew, not just to those above the line.

Protect your artistic self.

Get in class.

Keep going.

Don't give up.

NEVER give up!

These are all pieces of advice I've received and also given as a teacher at [Warner Loughlin Studios](#) and UCLA. I am often asked to provide words of wisdom to other artists, especially newbies. And the truth is, I have a lot of wisdom to share! I better. I've survived this industry for over 30 years. I've failed more times than I can even count. I've made a lot of mistakes. I sure hope I've learned a thing or two or three or 100. What I would love to share with you today, though, is something that no one told me in the beginning—or for that matter, even five years ago.

This business is not the end all, be all.

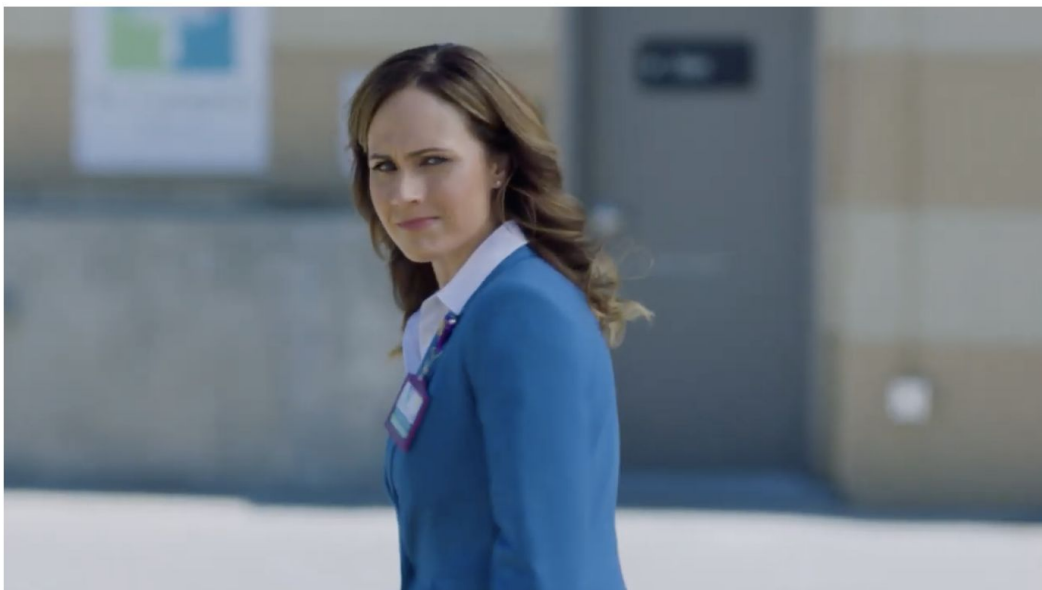
Seems simple enough, right? Except for the fact that we often let our acting careers define who we are, determine our self-worth, arbitrate our happiness, and compromise our integrity. Sound familiar? We do all kinds of crazy, unhealthy things to ourselves in the name of “being an artist,” and it's not OK. Such practices also have nothing to do with being an artist.

I spent the majority of my life being tethered to (in the words of Amy Poehler's “Yes, Please”) a “bad boyfriend.” Poehler explains in her book that this industry is like a bad boyfriend who you give your everything to and in exchange, he doesn't call or text back, he sees other women and men, and then he dumps you for the hotter, younger version of yourself. When I read this, it felt like I had finally heard someone articulate what it sometimes feels like to be an actor in a relationship with Hollywood.

So, how do we proceed? I'm not saying we dump our "bad boyfriend." Poehler didn't! I didn't! And you shouldn't, either—unless you really want to, then by all means. (I would recommend a Jerry Maguire–style exit; always seemed like a fun idea.)

Instead, I suggest you gain perspective and always, *always* take care of yourself. As hard as you work to grow your artist self, you should be working equally as hard on your human self. In my opinion, they are one and the same, but we often devote every second of our being to acting class, auditioning, trying to get auditions, complaining that we can't get auditions, meeting with agents and managers, trying to get an agent or manager, complaining that we can't get an agent or manager, and so on and so on. What we sometimes forget along the way is the person who was worthy long before the dream of becoming an actor was born and the person who will still be worthy long after the dream of becoming an actor has been achieved.

For me, the rollercoaster finally became too much. I wanted to be an actor, but I also wanted to be happy, so I had to make a decision. Either I was going to leave the industry completely, stay in it and continue down this toxic path, or stay in it with some amendments to my relationship. I chose option No. 3. I decided that I wasn't going to allow something that brought me great joy and fulfillment to be taken away from me because I was unable to take control of my reaction to it.



I brought other elements into my life that allowed me to live outside of the often all-consuming world of Hollywood. I finished my college degree. I began teaching. I volunteered with organizations I cared about. I started a family. Eventually, my spirit was being filled up by the life I was living which, in turn, freed me up to be a better artist.

I also had to learn how to stay open. True openness doesn't mean allowing people to walk all over you or saying "yes" when you really mean "no." When you are really open, you can actually feel what your higher self is aligned to. You can feel into what is going to make your heart soar as opposed to break. It is only through opening ourselves up that we are able to navigate the often murky waters of this industry with both caution and curiosity, discernment and delight. Knowing the difference takes knowing oneself; it takes openness.

By placing just as much importance on developing positive self-worth, self-love, strong personal boundaries, and creating a supportive and loving community around you, you will not only be able to navigate your experience in this industry in a more healthy way, you will be doing something for the whole self. You see, it is not only our job as a human being to be on the path to becoming the best version of ourselves; it is also our job to serve. When we do better, the whole does better. When we rise, others rise with us. My entire relationship with this business has never been better. When you no longer allow this industry to define you or determine your happiness or self-worth, it frees you up to play again.

A wise man (otherwise known as my ear, nose, and throat doctor) once said to me, "Intelligence is learning from your own mistakes. Genius is learning from the mistakes of others." So, to all you geniuses out there, please learn from mine!

Read the essay here:

<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/hollywood-bad-boyfriend-nikki-del-oach-acting-advice-67999/>

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GET TO KNOW NIKKI DELOACH: STAR OF THE NEW HALLMARK CHRISTMAS MOVIE REUNITED AT CHRISTMAS



Writer, producer and mother, Nikki DeLoach, is known for playing Lacey Hamilton in the critically-acclaimed series of *Awkward* for five seasons. Now with her latest role in brand new Christmas movie, *Reunited At Christmas*, set to premiere next month we sat down and got to know the woman who we all saw on everyone's favorite, *The Mickey Mouse Club*, alongside Justin Timberlake and Ryan Gosling.

Nikki DeLoach has gone through what she describes as her most challenging year to date this year and we found out how she juggles a busy acting career, two small children and a passion for women's empowerment.

Your latest film, Truly, Madly, Sweetly just premiered! This was your first job after having your second child. How was it getting back into working?

It was both excruciatingly difficult and full of joy and fulfilling. Which I think is probably a perfect analogy to life, right? My second pregnancy was complicated, and the birth of my child was nothing short of traumatizing as he was born with a heart defect and had to undergo open heart surgery at 5 days old. He came home on oxygen for 6 months. I went back to work after he had come off oxygen, so leaving him to go back to work was extremely hard. However, it was also great to be able to do what I love to do while being surrounded by the loveliest humans on set. It was a much-needed break in what had been the most difficult year of my life to this point.

How is life being a Mother of two?

Hudson was the most wonderful, life-changing, heart opening thing I've ever done in my life. Bennett was the second. The two of them together make up my heart. Parenting two is equal parts, exhausting and exhilarating, maddening and jubilant. Being a mom is the most important thing I've ever done in my life. At the same time, it is hard. There's not two of me, which is complicated when they both need you at the exact same time. However, one of the things that the last year taught me after our sweet addition, is that I can do anything. I am stronger than I ever thought I could be.

You are going to be a part of Hallmark Movies' Miracles of Christmas – Reunited at Christmas. Can you tell us a little bit about this project?

Gladly! It's about a family that hasn't been together over the holidays for a long time. When the matriarch, Nana Madaline, passes away, she leaves behind a wish— for the whole family to spend one last Christmas together in the house they always stayed in over the holidays. It's a true ensemble movie. This was very important to me. I wanted a family's story to be told, and I really think it will resonate with our audience.

At the age of 12 you joined The Mickey Mouse Club, alongside Ryan Gosling, Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, to name a few. What do you remember about this time? Are you still in contact with any of your fellow club members?

I remember this time in my life as being exciting, fulfilling, full of fun and happy memories. This was a place where I was surrounded by peers— kids that had the same interests as me. So, in a

way, I felt like I had found a home. It was also a place where I could learn and grow as an artist. It was like the best performing arts school ever created. I am still friends with a handful of my cast mates. It's so nice because we went through something that very few people have experienced being on that show. It's an exclusive club and I am so grateful that I got to be a part of it.

One of your most popular roles has to be Lacey Hamilton on *Awkward*. Are there any similarities between yourself and Lacey after playing her for quite some time?

Haha! Yes, there were similarities. Like Lacey, I have the best of intentions, I love my children more than anything else in this world. I had a complicated relationship with my mother, and I grew up in a place in the world where personal esthetics were overvalued. With that being said, I've never been so different from a character. Lacey and I were so opposite in so many ways. Especially in the execution of those foundational shared characteristics. I could never imagine telling my daughter to get a good job to help with her popularity! I miss playing her so much.

You are strongly involved in empowering women! Can you tell us a bit about your blog: “What We Are”, how it started and where the inspirations came from?

I think women are the bravest, strongest, most incredible beings. Every woman in my life is so inspiring. “What We Are” is certainly a labor of love that I also feel is really important. My co-founder, Jen Dede, and I became friends many years ago at a time in our lives where living inauthentically simply wasn't an option anymore. We wanted to do the work to love ourselves unconditionally— the good, the sad, and the very, very messy. And we wanted to have the type of friendship that reflected that which meant being vulnerable and open about who we are and where we are in life. It was amazing! And then we began encouraging that in all our friendships, and now we belong to this beautiful community of women who all show up as is and are supported and loved. We wanted to create a space in the world where women everywhere could feel into that— a place where they could be their beautifully unfiltered selves and be celebrated for it.

You're always so busy with your career! What can we expect to see from you next?

Besides “Reunited at Christmas” and “What We Are” I am back in developing mode— writing and producing. So, hopefully lots of great things soon. I also am a spokesperson for “The Alzheimer's Association” and “Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.” This is something I am very dedicated to and fills up a lot of my time.

Here at BELLA our tagline is Beauty Defined by You. Can you tell us what beauty means to you?

My dear friend Madaline tells me that it is not our job to move through life being positive, instead it is our job to move through life being open. It's true— without being open we miss out on all the good stuff, on everything that matters. So, that's my answer... being open.

We absolutely loved getting to know Nikki and are so excited to have a cozy night in and watch the premiere of her brand-new film, Reunited at Christmas, which airs on November 21 on the Hallmark channel! You can keep up to date with all things Nikki by following her Instagram @nikdeloach.

Read the interview here:

<https://bellanyc.com/get-to-know-nikki-deloch-star-of-hit-series-awkward-and-new-hallmark-christmas-movie-reunited-at-christmas/>



HOLR EXCLUSIVE: GETTING TO KNOW ACTRESS NIKKI DELOACH

From starring in a critically acclaimed TV series to becoming one of the Hallmark Channel's leading ladies, Nikki DeLoach is showing us that she really can do it all.

In a tribute to Nikki DeLoach's stellar acting skills, you will remember her as one of *Awkward's* leading female protagonists, Lacey Hamilton. Recently, Nikki's newest television ventures find her as a rising Hallmark Channel star, with her latest film, *Two Turtle Doves*, airing just in time for the holiday season. With a vibrant television presence and over 116 K followers on Instagram, HOLR sits down to chat with Nikki about her growing career in front of the camera, her passions, and how she manages to juggle it all.

You have quite an impressive resume of television credits! From starring in silver screen films such as Love & Other Drugs, to being in one of TV's most critically acclaimed series, Awkward., to joining the Hallmark Channel, how have you seen yourself grow as an actress?

I've been in this business since I was a kid and I've learned to always put in the work. I always work hard in preparation for auditions and in preparation for filming, because to me, that's as much fun as playing on set. The biggest change in my acting is through my self-growth. At the end of the day, acting is about listening and responding, which requires presence, being in your body, and connecting.

Are there similarities or differences between your role in Awkward. that you notice with the roles you are in now?

There's a difference in all of the characters that I play. Not one character has ever been the same. Lacey Hamilton on *Awkward.* was most certainly one of a kind.

Can you tell us about your new star-studded Hallmark film, Two Turtle Doves? And are there any other projects you have coming up that you are excited about?

Yes! First and foremost, the team that I got to work with on *Two Turtle Doves* was such a blessing. The perfect ensemble cast and incredible creative team of Lesley Demetriades, Ashley Squires and Sarah Montana, it could not have been better. I have a few projects in development with Hallmark and two of them will be shot in 2020.

You used to be a member of the Mickey Mouse Club in the 90's- can you share a little bit more about that experience?

It was a dream come true for a kid that since the age of 3 just wanted to tell stories and perform. It was such an incredible learning experience for anything you might want to do in the entertainment business, whether it's music, comedy, hosting, etc. I'm super grateful that I got to be a part of that legacy.

Your community blog, What We Are, is a dedicated platform aimed at uniting women through shared experiences. As an advocate for women empowerment, tell us about when you knew you wanted to share your passions with the world.

I've always been a person who has led with a service driven heart. I believe in living a life of purpose. I spent a lot of my life believing that that purpose was being an entertainer. When I went through what I did with my youngest son's heart condition and my father's dementia, it changed me forever. I realized that my purpose is much bigger than any job or any role I could ever have. It's to leave the world better than when I came into it and I get to accomplish that with What We Are and with my work with the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and the Alzheimer's Association.

Your journey to spread awareness doesn't stop there; you're also a strong proponent for education and a budding philanthropist- how do you manage to juggle it all?

I'm very organized. I create space for everything that matters to me first and then insert my work around that if possible. When I'm on set filming, it's hard to make room for anything else. However, the second I leave set, I'm in control of my schedule and seek to be really cognizant of my time, which includes time for myself. Self-care has been a very tough lesson this year, but one that is necessary. I also have a lot of help.

What does the future look like for Nikki DeLoach?

I have no clue. Every time I thought my life was going in a certain direction, God would surprise me and the direction would shift. I'm trying to stay open to whatever comes my way, without expectation, and follow the things in my life that fulfill me personally and professionally. I plan to keep showing up in places where I can be of service.

Read the interview here:

<https://www.holrmagazine.com/birmingham-alabama-with-gilda-joelle/>

ELYSIAN

ELYSIAN'S 22 QUESTIONS WITH NIKKI DELOACH



Q: What is one thing you can't live without?

A: *My kids.*

Q: Why is it important for women to support women?

A: *At the end of the day, I feel like when one of us rises, we all rise together. If history has proven anything, if women don't lift each other, no one else will.*

A rising tide floats all boats!

Q: If you could spend the day with anyone living or dead, who would it be and why?

A: *I'd spend one last day with my grandfather who passed away almost five years ago.*

Q: What has been the most rewarding project of your career?

A: *In terms of acting, I'm really proud of the work I did on *Awkward* and really proud of the show that we made. In my personal life, I'm extremely proud of the work that I've done and continue to do with the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and the Alzheimer's Association.*

Q: When were you happiest?

A: *Now. My youngest son currently has a healthy heart. Both of my kids are thriving. My husband and I are fortunate enough to still be together after 20 years. We have great jobs, a roof over our heads and we are surrounded by incredible family and friends.*

Q: What is the worst job you've done?

A: *After the first season of Awkward was filmed, I was interning at a production company because I wanted to learn the business side. They started me by answering phones and I couldn't figure out how to use them, so they took me off and had me just read scripts instead. It wasn't the worst job I've ever had but the most incompetent I've ever been in my life.*

Q: Where is one place in the world you would love to visit next?

A: *Africa*

Q: How do you relax?

A: *I love to take baths while watching TV on my iPad.*

Q: What is your daily skincare routine?

A: *I use products from Dr. Lancer, a dermatologist in Los Angeles. It's a whole regimen that takes about 10 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes at night. It involves exfoliating, cleansing, spraying, applying and more applying. I just started using the products and I can already see a huge difference in my face.*

Q: What is your most cherished beauty product?

A: *Dry shampoo, sunscreen and Aquaphor.*

Q: Favorite accessory and why?

A: *I have a necklace that was made by my friend Monica Stanley at Leenabell. She makes bar necklaces and I have my sons' names engraved on each side. I never take it off.*

Q: What is your favorite high-end brand to splurge on?

A: *My face products by Dr. Lancer. I don't really splurge on anything else.*

Q: What is the biggest misconception about your profession?

A: *That it's always glamorous and just because you're an actor, you're always successful. Only 5% of actors make enough money to not have a second job, so it's an extraordinarily tough profession. There are people in the industry that present themselves as if they're more important because of what they do for a living, but that's not true. No matter what job you have, everyone is equal.*

Q: Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

A: *I recently listened to several podcasts that I was a guest on and for an academic, it was astounding and horrifying how many times I used the words "like" and "um". I'm trying to be more cognizant.*

Q: What trait do you most admire in others?

A: *Kindness.*

Q: Who would play you in the film of your life?

A: *If it was a movie about my childhood, Michaela Russell. If it was about my 20's, Kaitlyn Dever and Brie Larson for my 30s.*

Q: How would you like to be remembered?

A: *I would like to be remembered as a person who loved hard, a great mom, a great wife, a great friend and a person with a service driven heart. A person that left the world better than she came into it.*

Q: Is there a specific film or actor that inspired you to act?

A: *Yes, "Singing in the Rain" and Barbra Streisand in "Funny Girl".*

Q: Why did you start the What We Are blog? And can you discuss why vulnerability is our superpower?

A: *Jen Dede, What We Are co-founder, kind of walked into my life at that point in time where I was like, 'I want to wake up and I want to be the most authentic version of myself. And I don't care if it's messy and I don't care if it's ugly. And I don't care if my messiness makes people uncomfortable.' This is important. This is important to living a good life." From this revelation, we founded What We Are. It started as a hobby blog has now turned into a platform and a movement for women about women.*

It takes more strength to be vulnerable than it does to pretend, deny or be in resistance to your feelings. You actually can't feel your feelings without vulnerability. Only by being vulnerable can we truly learn to love and accept ourselves; and love and accept others. Only through vulnerability can we live an authentic life.

Q: Who's an actor or director that you would love to work with?

A: *I would love to work with Diane Keaton, Allison Janney, Holly Hunter, Julianne Moore and the list goes on. As far as directors, Steven Spielberg and Greta Gerwig.*

Q: Can you tell us about your work with The Alzheimer's Association? How did you first get involved and what it means to you.

A: *I first got involved when my father was diagnosed with Pick's disease, a very rare and aggressive form of dementia in the summer of 2017. I also lost my grandfather to Alzheimer's and my father's mother also has it. I'm a big believer in turning your pain into purpose and living a life of service, so it made perfect sense for me to get involved with the organization based on how dramatically it has impacted my family. It's the 6th leading cause of death in the US and every 65 seconds, someone is diagnosed. It is a disease that needs our awareness, our help and our money.*

Q: Do you have any upcoming projects with Hallmark that you can tell us about?

A: *Right now, "Two Turtle Doves" is airing on the Hallmark Movies & Mysteries Channel, which will be playing throughout the holidays. I'm currently in development on a three other projects for 2020.*

Photographer: Inda Reid at Images by Inda

Hair: Kyle Hennessy

Make Up: Ashley Beverly Cordova

Read the interview here:

<https://readelysian.com/2019/11/25/elysians-22-questions-with-nikki-deloach/>

HollywoodLife

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

APRIL 26, 2019 8:51PM EDT

'Awkward's Nikki DeLoach Reveals Why She'd 'Absolutely' Love A Revival Of The Series



Inda Reid @imagesbyinda

'Awkward's Nikki DeLoach, who is starring in a new Hallmark Hall Of Fame movie, tells HollywoodLife EXCLUSIVELY why she would jump at the chance to star in a revival of the MTV series.

Upon discussing MTV's [*Awkward*](#) — one of our favorite series *ever* — **Nikki DeLoach**, who played Lacey Hamilton on the show, said she'd "ABSOLUTELY" love for a series revival to happen because it's one of her "greatest wishes". In fact, it doesn't sound like a revival of the MTV series, which ran on the network between 2011 and 2016, would be that hard to plan, as Nikki revealed she still keeps up with all of her co-stars. "#Awkwardforever," she shared. Are you reading this, MTV? We know it's only been three years since the series went off the air, but we still want a revival and so does Nikki, 39!

Even so, there's no guarantee we'll get a revival, so Nikki is starring in other projects, including Hallmark Hall Of Fame's latest movie, [*Love Takes Flight*](#), which premieres on April 27. In the film, Nikki stars as a single mother and hospital administrator determined to improve the hospital's conditions while also caring for her young daughter, Quinn, and she told us that the script really appealed to her upon first reading it. "I love that [the movie] is based on a true event. The romance is sprinkled into it, but the seed of the idea came from a viral video of a young girl and her mother in a grocery store offering a hug to this older gentleman who had lost his wife. A friendship came out of it, and this connection helped the gentleman to heal – it gave him purpose to continue on after the passing of his wife. We can learn from this. Every encounter with someone is an opportunity. An opportunity to be of service, even if it's just a smile and a 'hello.' But it means we have to open ourselves up, we have to become vulnerable in order to do so," she said.



As for what's next for Nikki, she told us, "I'm so proud of the blog I co-founded with my friend Jen Dede called 'What We Are.' We are so fortunate to have had so many amazing women share their stories with us. I would love for people to check it out at <http://welcometowhatweare.com>. It's all about creating a community of women where they can be their unfiltered selves. I'm back in development, not only with Hallmark, but on several other projects. I'll be doing another movie soon. I'm heading to New York City next week to do some work with the Alzheimer's Association, a cause near and dear to my heart. Besides that, I'm busy doing my most important job – being a mom to my two boys."

Read the interview here:

<https://hollywoodlife.com/2019/04/26/awkward-reboot-nikki-deloach-interview-love-takes-flight/>

WOMAZE

WOMEN WHO WOMAZE: NIKKI DELOACH



Women Who Womaze: Nikki DeLoach

PHOTO CREDIT: INDA REID

Nikki DeLoach stars in the upcoming movie ***Two Turtle Doves*** , premiering **November 1st** on Hallmark Movies & Mysteries — and she's shared some of her top tools with us! Nikki is also the co-founder of ***What We Are***, a blog community that aims to unite women and give them a platform to share common experiences on issues they are facing today.

What was your inspiration for starting your blog, What We Are?

My bestie Jen Dede and I became friends at a time in our lives where we were tired of pretending that everything was great! You know what I'm talking about. We've all been guilty of answering the question "How are you?" with a false "Great, fantastic, amazing!" We wanted to tell the truth and build an authentic friendship with each other. We wanted to be totally vulnerable and open with what we were going through in life. And we have certainly gone through it. Jen battled a painful fertility journey for 10 years. I battled suicidal postpartum depression and then Bennett's health situation. Now I am losing my father to Pick's Disease, a rare and aggressive form of dementia, at 65 years old. We built something really special in our friendship and wanted to show other women that they could do the same. We also wanted to highlight all the incredible women in our lives! We wanted to show others that vulnerability is a superpower and it's only through opening ourselves up and sharing the things that we've been through that we take ourselves out of isolation and connect.

We call Womaze your "toolbox for life" because we feature tools for mental health, self-care, relationships, body image, and more. What are some of your top tools for life?

Years ago I was given the advice that our most important job as human beings is to remain open. Whether you are moving through something painful, joyful, celebratory, or traumatic . . . just stay open. It's especially difficult to do so when you are going through something that's extremely hard because our first instinct is often to escape, deny, resist, etc. However, if you can stay open and vulnerable inside of all the feelings, that's where the growth exists. That's where the miracles and magic live. Meditation and exercise are critical to my mental and emotional health. The dopamine and oxytocin rush that you get from moving your body is super important. The stillness that you get from stopping, breathing, and turning within is a necessity if you want to live a life of awareness. Lifting weights is the majority of my physical training. I have osteopenia and lifting weights is the first line of defense. I eat healthy, lots of protein. I think of my being as something that is sacred. I honestly didn't truly learn this until my youngest was born with multiple heart defects. He had three heart surgeries before the age of two. Bennett is doing well, but our health is not given. Life is very, very precious. Most importantly, give yourself a break. Be kind to you. Laugh, have dance parties, let yourself off the hook. You are probably doing the best you can. And if not, shift gears and get it together. You have everything you need right inside of you!

What is one challenge that you turned into an opportunity?

I've turned the challenge of my son being born with multiple heart defects and my dad's dementia into an opportunity to raise awareness and money for places like Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and The Alzheimer's Association that are truly making a difference. I became a spokesperson for both organizations. I recently joined the board of CHLA. It's been one of the greatest honors of my life to be a part of both. It is so important to turn your pain into purpose.

What is one of the best pieces of wisdom and advice you've heard?

I'll go back to what I said above about remaining open. It was a game changer for me. Feel your feelings and do not be afraid to walk through the valleys. Plus, don't be afraid to share what you are experiencing with others. It really taught me that I can trust myself.

What lesson are you currently learning?

I am currently learning the self-care lesson and what that REALLY means. We think it means doing, but it actually means being. Just being. Yes, working out, eating healthy, pedicures, facials . . . that can all be a part of your self-care routine. But, all of that requires doing when sometimes we really just need to BE. We need to sit and watch a sunset. I get that we don't always have the time to watch the sky turn from day to night but, we need to find that type of "being in the moment" in other ways. I am in the process of learning what that actually entails.

What are a few of the things you're most passionate about?

I am passionate about my children, my husband, my family, and my friends. I am passionate about Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and finding a cure for Alzheimer's. I am passionate about being a story teller and telling stories that matter!

What's one message that you think the world needs to hear?

Life is a gift. A very precious gift. Each and every one of us has a choice: to make the most of that gift or let it fall away. It's important to have purpose in order to make the most of your life. I believe purpose to be two-fold. I believe our purpose in each lifetime is to 1) become the best version of yourself mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically and 2) try and leave the world better than you entered it. You grow yourself, you grow the whole. We are one. We are not separate. We are in this thing together. We need to put service first - service to the betterment of ourselves and others.

Stay in touch with Nikki on [Instagram](#), and check out ***Two Turtle Doves***, premiering on Hallmark Movies & Mysteries on November 1st!

Read the interview here:

<https://www.womaze.com/blog/2019/10/7/nikki-deloch>

International Business Times

Nikki DeLoach Reveals This Emotional ‘Two Turtle Doves’ Scene Was Based On A True Story



Hallmarkies get to see even more of Nikki DeLoach on their screens when her third Hallmark movie — and second with Michael Rady — of the year, “Two Turtle Doves,” premieres on Hallmark Movies & Mysteries tonight.

The new 2019 *Miracles of Christmas* film, which was helmed by first-time Hallmark director Lesley Demetriades and written by Sarah Montana based on a story by Lesley, Christine Demetriades and Ian Carroll follows as “Dr. Sharon [Harper, played by DeLoach] searches for a beloved family heirloom in a small Christmas town,” according to the synopsis. “When she unexpectedly discovers an adorable little girl and her disheartened father (Rady), she realizes that Christmas miracles really do happen.”

In anticipation of the “Two Turtle Doves” premiere Friday, International Business Times spoke with [DeLoach](#) all about what makes this Christmas movie so special, the difference between this [Hallmark](#) film and her last with Rady (“Love to the Rescue”) and the based-on-a-true-story scene that had her fighting back tears.

International Business Times: What can you tell us about your new Hallmark Movies & Mysteries Christmas film, “Two Turtle Doves”?

Nikki DeLoach: Our director Lesley and her mother came up with this beautiful idea of two characters that are both grieving in their lives but in different ways. My character recently lost her grandmother, and Michael Rady’s character lost his wife a couple of years back. And they wanted to tell a story of two characters that are trying to move through grief over the holiday. While it may sound like a real downer, it’s actually not because... [it’s about] how if you can allow yourself to open up, and if you open up to not moving through the grief in isolation, and you can do that with someone else, along the way you might just find magic and miracles, and you also might find love. And that is the story that we’re telling.

IBT: Did you feel it was important to tell this story about dealing with grief around the holidays?

DeLoach: Yes, it's so important because the holidays are the hardest time, and grief is universal. We all know the feeling of losing something, whether it's a beloved pet or a human being in our lives that we loved deeply. And if you haven't experienced that, you're going to at some point in your life, and you're going to have the experience of having to move through that at the holidays, which is the toughest time to do so.

We still have all the fun that Hallmark movies offer and all the romance that they offer, but we also tell the story inside of it, and I think that it's something that a lot of people will be able to relate to.

IBT: Did Hallmark reach out to you about doing this movie, or did you reach out to them about wanting to help tell this story?

DeLoach: I reached out to them because I really wanted to be a part of Lesley's story. I really wanted to make it happen, and I also, whenever I reached out to them, I said, "Listen, if you can throw Michael Rady in that mix, then it'll be the best early Christmas present possible for me because I really think Michael and I could drive this home and knock it out of the park for Lesley."

IBT: What are the differences between your "Two Turtle Doves" and "Love to the Rescue" characters?

DeLoach: In "Love to the Rescue," I played a very free, playful, throw-spaghetti-up-against-the-wall, life-is-nothing-but-fun kind of character. In "Two Turtle Doves," I loved my character because I played a Brené Brown type. She's a scientist, and her job is really to research the things that matter, and for her, her focus is trauma on the brain, and one of the things [she focuses on is grief].

IBT: Is there a scene you really loved shooting or that you can't wait for fans to see?

DeLoach: There was a scene that we shot that was very emotional to get through...It was really difficult in this scene for both me and Michael to get through it without sobbing because we knew it was real. Our writer, Sarah Montana...she lost her mother and one of her siblings when she was younger. They were killed by a person who had befriended the family, and it was incredibly tragic, and all that was left was her dad and her brother. And in this scene — she wrote this scene mirroring an experience she had had with her own brother over the holidays where her brother admitted to her that he had been trying not to be sad or to show anyone he was sad because he didn't want to make other people feel sad, and she was like, "It's okay, buddy, it's okay to feel sad. We all feel sad." And he was like, "Yeah, but it just looks like you're being so happy and being so strong, and I don't know how to do that the way that you do." And she was like, "I'm not, though, I am heartbroken underneath. I just didn't want to make you feel that way." And he was like, "Will I feel this way forever? Will Christmas always feel like this? Will the holidays always feel like this?"

She basically brought that scene to life for "Two Turtle Doves," but in this experience we were having it with Michaela [Russell] and Michael's characters. Michaela comes in and she has that same conversation and is like, "Will Christmas always feel this way?" And because we knew that it was planted in reality for Sarah, it was really hard to get through.

If you don't have tears in your eyes during that scene, you might be a robot.

See DeLoach in the emotional and romantic story of "Two Turtle Doves" when it premieres on Hallmark Movies & Mysteries on Friday at 9 p.m. EDT. The actress is also getting ready to walk in the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's fundraiser on Saturday and anyone interested in donating to the cause can do so via DeLoach's [online donation page](#).

Read the interview here:

<https://www.ibtimes.com/nikki-deloch-reveals-emotional-two-turtle-doves-scene-was-based-true-story-2858312>



Exclusive Interview: Pop-Culturalist Chats with Nikki DeLoach



Nikki DeLoach has always known she wanted to pursue a career in the arts, but it hasn't come without its challenges, setbacks, and sacrifices. Like her character Natalie in *Truly, Madly, Sweetly*, premiering tonight at 9/8c on the Hallmark Channel, Nikki has continued to push forward and has never given up on her dreams. She's built an illustrious career that spans across film, television, and music, including roles on MTV's critically acclaimed #1 scripted series, *Awkward.*, *Days of Our Lives*, *North Shore*, and countless others. She's taken each experience as an opportunity to learn more about herself and her story is an inspiring message for all the dreamers out there. Pop-Culturalist was lucky enough to chat with Nikki about *Truly, Madly, Sweetly*, how she balances life as a mom and wife with her career, and a possible *Awkward.* reunion.

P-C: Tell us about *Truly, Madly, Sweetly*, your character, and what drew you to that project.

Nikki: *Truly, Madly, Sweetly* is about a girl named Natalie, who is a dreamer and a baker, and Eric, who is more of a businessman. The two of them get thrown together because of a woman named Bea, who owns a bakery. She's Eric's aunt and Natalie's mentor. She taught Natalie how to bake. The two of them inherit Aunt Bea's old bakery. They have to come together and decide what to do with the bakery. He wants to sell it. She wants to keep it. She wants to have her own bakery like she's always dreamed of, and she wants to preserve Aunt Bea's legacy. Like all Hallmark movies, they end happily ever after. It's more of a journey about the two characters getting there.

What I loved about this movie is that it's a real two-hander. They gave the guy a great storyline, as well as the lead actress. Sometimes, it's just the lead actress who has the storyline. There's a lot of comedy and it's a sweet story. The moral of the story is to bet on yourself and never give up on your dreams. For me, that's what drew me to it.

In my life, I've been knocked down so many times. I've been in this business for over thirty years, ever since I was a little kid. I've had to start over so many times when I didn't even have two dimes to rub together, just like Natalie. When we find her at the beginning of the movie, she's starting over. Her boyfriend has broken her heart and he's also stolen all of her recipes and turned them into a book that he claims to be his own. Now, he's experiencing superstardom, while she's working in a food truck. She's

barely even making the payment on that! But she never gives up. I think that's what's super inspiring about this character and this story. Along the way, she takes another chance at love.

P-C: Your co-star, Dylan, is a writer and executive producer on this film. He's said in previous interviews that he has always pictured you as Natalie. How did the two of you meet and does that add an extra layer of pressure heading into filming?

Nikki: [laughs] A couple of years ago, I went up to him at a Hallmark event and we started talking. He and his wife are both writers, and I told him, "I'm super interested in working with women in this industry who are writers, producers, and directors." He jokingly was like, "But, not me!" I was like, "No, no, no, you too!" They're a team. They work together as a team. I find what he and his wife do terrific. It's great that they work together.

I've always heard he was a terrific producer to work with. For me, in my life, I have two kids, I have a lot going on. I want to work with people that are good people. I want to have good experiences as much as possible. Any time that you can set yourself up for a good time, you want to. That made me really interested in working with Dylan. When this came along, I had a seven-month-old. We were coming off not only just having a baby, but having a baby who had open heart surgery at five-days-old. He had just gotten off oxygen when Hallmark called. It was a hard decision, in terms of my personal life, but it was an easy decision to make professionally.

P-C: How are you able to juggle both your personal and professional life?

Nikki: It's hard. It's really hard. Any mom who tells me that they've found a great balance, I'm always like, "What's your secret?" I have so many friends who are moms and they work. A lot of them run huge businesses. I find that you can't find balance. Balance is b.s. in a way. [laughs] You do the best that you can and that's the truth. But at any given time, you're not fulfilling one of your jobs. You can't be in two places at one time. When I'm with my kids, I can't be at work, and when I'm at work, I can't be with my kids, and then there's the husband! He always says he comes third. [laughs] I don't know that you can actually find the perfect balance, but for me, my family always comes first.

If there's anything that I need to handle or if I need to be with them, then work has to wait. That's just how it is. With that being said, I had a mother who loved her job. I saw her work from the time I was a little girl. It was so inspiring, and it built so much confidence in me and so much self-worth. I had this beautiful example of what it was to be a working mother, and I want to give that to my kids. I want to show my sons what that looks like. I want them to see their mom who's not only fulfilled in her family life but also her work life. That's really important to me. I may never find the perfect balance but at the end of the day, it's about having your priorities in line. For me, it's family first and work second.

P-C: That's a great answer! Like you said earlier, Aunt Bea is a mentor to Natalie. Who was that person for you in your career?

Nikki: Oh, wow! That's a really, really, really, good question. It's interesting. I've been lucky enough to have had a few mentors in my career. I've had so many people throughout my life who have inspired me, and I've had a lot of great teachers.

It started with my dance teacher when I was four-years-old. I've been lucky enough to have had a lot of mentors in life, not necessarily in the industry, but mostly in life, which I feel is more important. I'm a teacher myself. I teach at Warner Loughlin Studios and I teach comedy and drama at UCLA. I find that one of the more rewarding experiences about being a teacher is that you get to help other people believe in themselves and help them find their self-worth. You get to help them find their creative center and help them get inspired by their own lives. I've been lucky enough to have a lot of those people. But, the most important job of a teacher is to teach them to become the best version of themselves as human beings. I always say, "You feed the human. You feed the actor."

For me, Chuck Yerger was a huge mentor to me. He was my teacher in the *Mickey Mouse Club*. I had to do on-location education because I was on set. Chuck taught everything from English to science. He was a great mentor as a human being. He's one of the best people I've ever known in my life. Also, my grandfather was such a big mentor to me. I have this wonderful woman in my life, Madeline. I've known her since my late twenties. She is my North Star. She's a true guiding light in my life. I look around me and there are so many people who have shown up to help me to be the person I am now and help me be the best version of myself, and they continue to do so. I really feel that if you have people in your life that are helping you grow your human self, it's going to affect your creative self.

P-C: Like you said earlier, Natalie has always dreamed of owning her own bakery. When the opportunity presents itself, it'll force her to overcome her trust issues. What was your favorite aspect to explore with your character?

Nikki: Honestly, it was the trust thing. It was really interesting to explore, even though I've been with my husband for nineteen years. [laughs] I obviously have a lot of trust in my man. I think just having faith in general, you know? The last year of my life has definitely been the most difficult I've ever experienced with my son. I have to say it's taken an overwhelming amount of trust and faith in believing that he's going to be okay, that he's going to make it, that his heart will be made whole, and that he's going to live an incredible life.

It's very easy to allow fear and doubt to plague not just your mind but your heart, and let it consume you. You're a human being. You're going to have doubts and that's okay. Fear is okay because fear is a great teacher. It forces you to wake up and be present. It tells you to pay attention to what's happening right now because things are changing. However, it's the way that you move through the fear and doubt that matters. It teaches you a lot about how you trust and whether you have faith. It applies to anything in life, whether it's the health of your kid or falling in love—it's taking that leap of faith and believing that it's all going to be okay in the end. Coming out of the situation that I had, it was creatively a lot of fun to explore her issues with trust. I think it's also why I was the right actress to play this role at this time.

P-C: Later this year, you're also starring and executively producing *Reunited at Christmas*. Can you tell us about that project and how challenging it is to have dual roles?

Nikki: [laughs] It's been quite the challenge. I can't even tell you! It's funny, usually when you're doing these Hallmark movies, it's a pretty easy experience. You're working with crews who do a lot of these. They know the footwork. They know what needs to happen. Everyone has their jobs. But, everything and anything that we could have had against us, in terms of a challenge, we definitely experienced it with this movie. But, we're making a great movie. It looks amazing and it's so good. I'm really excited about it. It's a different project for Hallmark. I'm so proud that they want to tell this story and they're allowing me to tell this story. I pitched this idea to them about a year ago and it's about a family who has gone through a divorce. For about six years, they've all experienced the holiday shuffle with the kids going between the mom and dad. They've fallen apart in terms of spending time together. Everyone ends up going their separate ways. The matriarch of the family ends up passing away. Her dying wish is that they spend one last Christmas together, celebrating with all the traditions that they used to do as a family. That's a very different story for Hallmark to tell.

It's a true ensemble piece. There's not just a strong A-storyline with the romance. There's a strong B-storyline with the parents coming back together. This is a very real Hallmark movie. We'll even see the awkwardness of a family who hasn't been together for a long time. We'll see them coming together and the moments where you remember what you used to fight about. But in the end, what I wanted to accomplish with this story is for people to see that no matter what you've been through as a family, it's so important to come together, especially for the holidays, and spend time with each other, and make the

traditions and being together a priority. Life is so short. You'll wake up and wonder why you let all that time pass you by. That was the true inspiration of the story. No matter where you move to, no matter what happens, always try to come back together.

The other thing that's quite different about this story is that I play a girl who's afraid to get married. She's scared to pull that trigger and say yes. She's scared of getting her heart broken. She's scared of ending up like her parents. There are so many cool, interesting parts to this story that I think are still very Hallmark, and still very on brand, but at the same time, it's a little different. I think the audience is really going to relate to it. I think it'll do well. I hope it does! It's my first time producing one of these. I'm just like, "Please, God, let it do well."



P-C: The film actually finds you reuniting with Mike Faiola, your co-star from *Awkward*. How helpful is that as an actor to go into a project with someone you've worked with and know?

Nikki: It's super helpful. When I was looking for guys for this project, I really, truly had a short list. I knew that I wanted a specific type of guy and Mike definitely fell into that category. Also, when you're doing movies like this and you have three weeks to finish it, it's a grueling schedule. It's not always the most glamorous. Everyone needs to be all-hands-on-deck. You can't be a prima donna, a princess, or a prince. You have to jump in and you have to get it done, no matter what it takes. I knew, having worked with Mike for six years, that no matter what he was going to have a great attitude, he was going to show up prepared, he was going to do a great job, he was going to have a lot of fun, and make the best out of any situation.

I did a Hallmark movie last year and it was a spring baseball movie. We were out on the field and it rained every single day of the production. It didn't just rain, it snowed and it hailed. We were going back to Vancouver and we were thinking that we could be up against that again. Steve Monroe was the director of *Perfect Catch*, the film where we had so many weather elements against us. I was so impressed by how he kept his cool. I don't know how he did it, but he made it look like that movie didn't have a drop of rain. I was like, "We need this guy!"

From Steve to Mike, I'm so lucky to have them both on this project. It was such an easy choice across the board. It was so nice to be reunited on this movie and hopefully, if it does really well, we'll get to do the sequel and be reunited again.

P-C: You've done a few projects with Hallmark. How did that relationship form and what has it meant for your career?

Nikki: I love working with Hallmark. They are so good to me and my family. They walk the talk. The things that they stand for, they really, really believe in, which are family, faith, love, happy endings, and resilience in their characters. They're all things that every single person at the network truly believes in. It's not only inspiring, but it's uncommon in our industry. I have a lot of respect for them.

I also love being able to do romantic comedies. I grew up on them. That's what I watched as a kid. That's where I learned comedy. It was from watching *When Harry Met Sally*, *While You Were Sleeping*, and every single Julia Roberts movie. There aren't enough romantic comedies out there. Hallmark is churning them out.

Outside of that, it came along at a time in my career where I also wanted to be a very active participant in

my children's lives. These projects allow me to do that. For this one, I did prep, then I went home, and then I came back for the filming. Then, I'll go home, write, and develop my next project until I come and do the next one. It allows me to be in both worlds. For that, I'm forever grateful to them.

Working with Bill Abbott, Michelle Vicary, and Randy Pope, they're really just personable, wonderful, hands-on executives. I can pick up the phone and call Randy, Michelle, or Bill anytime. I can email them and get a response back within 24 hours. What network does that?

P-C: There have been a lot of television shows that have been rebooted recently. Do you ever think we'll see an *Awkward.* reunion?

Nikki: I would love it so much! I have been thinking about pitching MTV an *Awkward.* movie or mini-series. I think a movie would be a lot of fun. It could be their ten-year high school reunion. I've been toying with the idea of going to MTV and pitching them that. If MTV doesn't want to do it, there's always Netflix. I think it would do so well. *Awkward.* ended too soon. It was at a weird time when people were really starting to stream, especially our demographic that was watching *Awkward.*, that's how they were getting all their shows. I believe MTV made a big mistake with pulling the plug. They were too focused on the live numbers and I think our audience agrees. I think there are a lot of people who would have followed that show for another two or three seasons. Hopefully, we can do some kind of reunion show or movie. The other show that I think would be so fun to bring back to life is *North Shore*. I did that in Hawaii for Fox. I'd love to go back to Hawaii. That whole cast was so much fun to work with. It was a soapy, nighttime drama. Also, girls and guys in bathing suits, beautiful beaches, cocktails, drama—who wouldn't want to see that?

P-C: When you look back on your *Awkward.* experience, what stands out to you the most and what was the biggest lesson you learned?

Nikki: I'll come at this from both a personal and professional aspect. From a professional aspect, I learned what kind of material I wanted to do. Lauren Iungerich created such a cool, fun, unique world to play in as an actor. It was super challenging and fun, especially for a character like Lacey. She had to be both dramatic and comedic. She was so outlandish at times, but I had to find a way to always ground her so the audience would believe she was a mother. I was always working really hard to find that right line of making them laugh but also making people believe that this mother is a real human being who would say these things to her daughter. I loved being challenged like that on a daily basis. It also was so much fun to play Lacey. I miss her every single day. She was such a challenging character. When I found her and was able to bring her to life, I realized I could do anything that I put my mind to. It gave me a lot of confidence.

Personally, I'm still friends with every single person on that show...not just friends; we're family. We're family forever. That was the greatest gift. I will forever be grateful for the relationships that I built on that show. Desi Lydic is one of my best friends. I don't know what I'd do without her in my life. Barret Swatek, who played Ally, is also one of my best friends. I love her dearly. Jillian, I talk to her every week. Molly, Beau, Brett, they all come to my kids' birthday parties. All of them have a special place in my heart. At the end of the day, it was one of those magical situations where I was fulfilled on both a professional and personal level. That's the kind of projects I want to be involved in. That's the kind of stuff I want to do. Life is too short to do something that may professionally fulfill you but personally make you miserable. I grew up on that show in a really big way.

Make sure to follow Nikki on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), and catch *Truly, Madly, Sweetly* premiering tonight on the Hallmark Channel at 9/8c.

Read the interview here:

<http://pop-culturalist.com/exclusive-interview-pop-culturalist-chats-with-nikki-deload/>



Nikki DeLoach – Truly, Madly, Sweetly

Q) What are some of the themes and undertones of the film *Truly, Madly, Sweetly*?

A) Some of the themes of *Truly, Madly, Sweetly* are learning to trust again, taking a leap of faith, and never giving up on love or your dreams.

Q) *Truly, Madly, Sweetly* isn't your average meet cute movie, what do you think that it is about food that tends to bring and bond people together?

A) Food makes people feel things. Whether it's a dish that you grew up on or certain foods that you eat when you celebrate, there is an emotional component to food. Also, food usually makes people happy and gives them that warm and fuzzy feeling. I think that's why people love watching movies that involve food.

Q) The hallmark of Hallmark movies is the great balance of heart and humor as well as love and lessons. How does this film stay consistent with that?

A) Absolutely. It truly is a romantic comedy, blending the heart and humor in such a fun way.

Q) Dylan Neal plays your love interest in the film, what did you enjoy the most about getting to work opposite of him?

A) I loved working with Dylan. He is prepared, present, and very funny. I don't know that he gets to exercise his comedy chops often, but he does in this movie and he is terrific. Dylan is such a great partner. I can't wait to do more with him.

Q) Was there any specific scene that you found challenging to film and why?

A) Well, I am not a baker. So, for me, the most difficult part of the movie was when I had to bake on camera. I probably needed a good month of lessons, but there wasn't any time. Maybe I will get a head start for Part 2.

Q) What do you think it is about the film that will draw viewers in?

A) I think the viewers will love the themes of this movies. Everyone can relate to finding the courage to take a leap of faith – whether that's in love or career. Also, I believe that most people have experienced betrayal in their lives and have had to learn to trust again, which is something that Natalie has to do. Plus, this movie is truly so sweet and so much fun to watch. It was really one of my favorite on-set experiences and I think that comes through on screen.

Q) We have seen you take on these dramatic diverse roles that really test and showcase your range. They have this incredible balance of vulnerability, complexity, and are innately compelling. How does this extend with *Truly, Madly, Sweetly* and what draws you into or connects you with these characters?

A) I love challenging myself as an actor. I know that if it scares me, I should probably say yes. The thing I loved about *Truly, Madly, Sweetly* is getting to play in the romantic comedy world. I grew up on these. Meg Ryan, Sandra Bullock, Julia Roberts – I watched these ladies fall in and out of love growing up. And to this day, I will choose to watch a romantic comedy over anything else. The problem is there are not enough of them. This movie is a true romantic comedy, and it was such a joy to play in this world.

Q) With an extensive career we have seen your characters push boundaries and turn their pain into power. What is it about these fierce but flawed driven females that we relate to and need to see more of?

A) This is such an excellent question. Thank you for asking. In life, I am a big believer in turning your pain into purpose. So, I love to see stories that portray that. We are all human beings who make human mistakes, who are often not the best versions of ourselves, who often get our hearts broken, who often experience tremendous pain. And I think it is extremely important to show it all. Not just women who are perfect, not just the ones who are getting everything right. It's not real and it portrays a false sense of who we are. It's also super limiting. As women, we are all the things. We are vulnerable, fierce, flawed and funny. We need to see that in the stories that we tell about women.

Q) How does the setting of the film play a role in the movie?

A) This movie is set in Fall. Metaphorically speaking, a lot of Natalie's past falls away in this movie. Personally, I love this time of year. It's not too hot, not too cold. It's just right.

Q) Your character Natalie runs a cupcake food truck, did this make you sick of sweets or crave them even more?

A) I actually don't really eat sugar! I have never eaten it, even as a kid. I was the kid who never ate her own birthday cake. I have a bad reaction to processed sugar. With that being said, in my last pregnancy, I couldn't get enough of a certain type of fresh baked cookie from Bristol Farms in LA. I would stop there every week and get a dozen and eat them all myself. It was kind of nice to be able to eat sweets and not have a terrible reaction to them.

Q) What do you hope viewers take away from watching *Truly, Madly, Sweetly*?

A) I hope it makes them really happy. I hope it makes them feel warm and fuzzy on the inside. I hope they can leave their troubles behind for two hours and allow a smile to spread across their faces.

Q) Besides your current Hallmark movie that airs on Saturday, what can you tell us about the holiday movie that you have been developing called *Reunited at Christmas*?

A) We are almost done filming *Reunited at Christmas*! It has been such a fun experience bringing this movie to life. It's about a family who hasn't been together in years over the holidays. When the matriarch of the family, Nana Madaline, passes away she leaves behind a dying wish which was that the whole family spend one last Christmas together, in her house, doing all the traditions they used to. The family is reunited, but it's quite the journey for them to get there. It's a beautiful story with so much heart.

Q) Why is it important for you to not just star in these projects, but also be a part of them from the ground up between both developing and producing; especially as a female in the industry?

A) I have always called myself a storyteller. Even when I was a little kid playing pretend, I would write out a script and give all my friends their role. I would direct it. I would pretend to shoot it with a camera. I was always interested in every aspect of bringing a story to life. It truly fulfills me on a level that just being an actor could never do. I love starting with a seed of an idea and seeing what can be built. I also love teamwork and collaboration. I am thrilled with how many women are now moving into positions of power, such as writer, producer, director. We need to be the ones telling our stories.

Read the interview here:

<http://starrymag.com/nikki-deload-truly-madly-sweetly/>

SEAT 42F

EXCLUSIVE : A DREAM OF CHRISTMAS Scoop: Shining The Spotlight On Nikki DeLoach



It is a Christmas wish that we would all love to have offered: a chance to live our dream. In Hallmark Channel's holiday film *A DREAM OF CHRISTMAS*, a young woman is given just that chance by a Christmas angel. Starring Nikki DeLoach, the film sparkles with joy and whimsy, and we cannot help but root for her and hope she gets all she has wished for. With one Hallmark film to her credit from last year, Nikki is more than at home in the magical world where amazing adventures and miracles happen. In an exclusive interview, Nikki shares what made this holiday film special for her and the happiness working with Hallmark brings to her life.

What drew you to the Hallmark film *A DREAM OF CHRISTMAS*?

NIKKI: I think what drew me to this film was the message. Also, I loved the character of Penny Atwell, whose story I found to be very relatable.

Who do you portray and how would you describe your character? What do you most admire about her?

NIKKI: Penny Atwell is a good sister, a hard worker, a good wife. She's a dreamer. She doesn't give up. She's always had a lot of hope. She's the woman who wants a happy marriage and wants to be fulfilled in her career. She wants it all!

But we find Penny at a place in her life where, despite all her efforts, her life isn't turning out the way she had planned. And so she's on the precipice of losing that hope of having a wonderful life. In a moment of frustration, she exclaims that she wishes she had a different life. And so the journey begins. What I admire about Penny is the fact that, in the end, she not only realizes what's truly important in life, but she creates the life she's always wanted without having to give up on her dreams.

What journey does she undertake in this film?

NIKKI: At the beginning of the movie, we see a woman who has worked so hard to have it all. After all, society tells us we can have it all, right? But, just like Penny, I've found that the road to having it all is often paved with sacrifices and disappointment. Sacrifices that women usually have to make much more so than men. But, what Penny learns is that without her family, friends, and community, all the money and success in the world won't make you happy. And in the end, Penny does get it all. What I've learned is that sometimes we just have to shift our perception on what the "ALL" looks like. It might just be better than we would have ever imagined!

What was your favorite part about working on the project?

NIKKI: Bringing a story like this to life was one of my favorite aspects of the project. Also, I was able to work with some amazing people, including Cindy Williams, who has always been a comedic heroine of mine. And she is EVERYTHING and more that you imagine her to be.

What was it like working with Andrew Walker in this film?

NIKKI: He's a doll. Andrew is so easy to work with. He's got a great attitude and is really there for you as an acting partner.

This is your second Hallmark film as you previously starred in CHRISTMAS LAND.

What is the appeal of working on Hallmark films?

NIKKI: I love the fact that my entire family can watch a Hallmark movie together. My nieces, my grandmother, my Dad...everyone! Most importantly, they always deliver such beautiful messages. In a world where we are often bombarded daily with negativity, I think that's so important.

What was the one thing you learned or took away from working on A DREAM OF CHRISTMAS?

NIKKI: More, please!! 😊 I love working for Hallmark. I love telling the stories they tell. And on a personal level, I was reminded of that great life lesson, that my journey is mine. No one else's, and I wouldn't want anyone else's journey. Everything in my life has been on purpose, for a purpose. This is a really beautiful lesson to remember.

If you were granted a Christmas wish by an angel, would you take advantage of it? Why or why not?

NIKKI: Yes, because I trust that I would make a very carefully considered wish! I mean, if I could wish that no more children went hungry knowing that this wish would come true, I would make it right now! I pray for that wish to come true every day.

At this stage of your career, what do you think you have learned from the amazing variety of roles and projects you have worked on?

NIKKI: I've been so fortunate to play so many different characters, both dramatic and comedic. I've learned more about humanity, for sure. I've become more compassionate because of that knowledge. When you step inside a character you have to justify their behavior; why they think and feel the way they do. It teaches you a great deal about human behavior. It's why storytelling often brings people together, makes people feel less alone. And with comedy...how great does it feel to sit with others and laugh. It's a connective tissue for humanity.

What are the perks of where you are in your career right now?

NIKKI: I don't have to say "yes" to everything. I am able to pick and choose what I want to do, and that is a tremendous luxury. One that I never take for granted.

Has there been any great advice you have gotten? What advice would you offer to other upcoming and aspiring actors?

NIKKI: My acting studio, Warner Loughlin Studios, where I act and teach has been such a safe haven for me. I grow and learn both professionally and personally every time I step through those doors. I would suggest to find a place, a community of people, that offers you a safe, positive environment in which to learn and grow. Warner teaches us to leave our egos at the door; ego being the great killer of creativity. I've always loved that and try to always live by it in my work and my life. I would also say to find something outside of acting that really inspires you, a passion where you can channel your creativity and energy. And even better, if that passion is able to bring in income. I've been in this business over 25 years. It's up and down. Having other interests keeps a person from riding an emotional roller coaster, which is dangerous. Lastly, don't allow your self-worth to be determined by exteriors. You are always enough. Always.

What do you aspire to do next?

NIKKI: Create material. Produce. Write. Continue to say yes to inspiring stories and characters as an actor. More importantly, I am more passionate than ever to get out in the world and make a difference. I've always be involved in organizations that are doing great things in our world. But, I feel now more than ever that people not only need basics like food, water, clothes, shelter, they need hope, love, faith and joy. They need to know that everything is going to be okay. I'm determined to be a part of that movement. Most importantly, I want to be the best mom I can be to my child.

Read the interview here:

<https://seat42f.com/exclusive-a-dream-of-christmas-scoop-shining-the-spotlight-on-nikki-deloadch.html>

MAXIM

Our Interview with Nikki DeLoach

By [ALEXA LYONS](#)



This *Awkward* star talks girl crushes, tequila, and guilty pleasures.

Tell me about your role on the MTV show *Awkward*.

It's my favorite role I've ever had. I play Lacey Hamilton - the overbearing, narcissistic, self-involved, but very well intentioned mother to Jenna Hamilton; it's the most fun I've ever had playing a character. It's such a blessing and I feel so fortunate that we're about to go into our 3rd season.

You definitely play the unconventional mother. Is that something you were used to growing up?

Not at all! In fact my mother was a teacher, then she was a principal, and now she is the superintendent of a school system. I had very strict parents, so Lacey is a departure for me across the board.

What was your high school experience like?

I grew up on set; I tend to think of the *Mickey Mouse Club* as being my own version of high school. I was cast as one of the seven younger kids who came on: it was me, Justin, Britney, Christina Aguilera, and Ryan Gosling. We were like the freshmen coming into high school that no one really wanted to be friends with, and we wanted so badly to fit in and for people to like us. Yes, it was different because it was in the world of the entertainment business, but it doesn't feel any different. It was very awkward.

Have you ever been fought over by two guys the way Jenna Hamilton is on the show?

Never! I don't know that I would want to be fought over. I think it would give me a lot of anxiety actually, to be fought over by two different guys. Plus I've been in a relationship for like 12 years now, so my window of guys fighting over me was gone a long time ago.

If you weren't an actress what would you be doing with your life?

Oh my gosh! I've actually thought about that question a million times. If I wasn't an actress I'd definitely want to do something in the arts and something that was very creative. I would hopefully produce, direct, and create material because I still want to be a storyteller. And then outside of that, something not in the arts whatsoever, I'd probably want to do something in the world of psychology, or being a counselor in some way shape or form. I went to school and got my degree in Psychology and English.

What is your favorite movie of all time?

O-M-G. My favorite movie of all time?! I would have to say *Funny Girl*. That movie encapsulates everything that made me want to be in the entertainment business. Barbra Streisand's performance in that movie was perfection to me. Every time I travel I take that movie with me and watch it while I'm going to sleep, when I get up in the morning, I just love it, she's perfect in it.

What is the last meal you would want to eat before you die?

I would have to say it would be southern cooking by my mom and my sister. I'm talking fried pork chops, sweet potato soufflé, turkey with giblet gravy and dressing, green bean casserole, my mom's strawberry pretzel salad.

What about drink wise; do you have a signature cocktail you always go to, or are you more of a beer drinker?

Shot of tequila and a Coors Light. That is for any good night, or even a barbecue. It just makes for a really nice buzz. It's a slow burn, which I like.

Who is your girl crush?

I'm going to have to say Connie Britton. I have four big girl crushes. The first one being [Connie Britton](#), [Sandra Bullock](#), [Jennifer Anniston](#) and [Tina Fey](#). Hot, Hot, Hot ladies.

What is your guilty pleasure?

I actually have a lot of guilty pleasures. I love to drink. I love beer, I love wine, and obviously I love tequila. I also love to eat; I love French fries, chicken nuggets, anything fried. I also record so much bad TV, but it makes me so happy. One of my favorite guilty pleasures is *The Young and the Restless*, I record it every single day.

What do you want for Christmas?

Honestly, I just want to be with my family, I want everyone I love to be healthy and to be happy. I know that sounds a little cheesy and maybe a little Pollyanna of me to say, but it's really true.

Read the interview here:

<https://www.maxim.com/women/our-interview-nikki-deload>



Q&A: THE BEAUTIFUL NIKKI DELOACH OF "AWKWARD"



Fans of MTV's *Awkward* are more likely to be found clicking around the site of our sister magazine *Seventeen* than over here. But it turns out the show, which kicked off its third season last night, has broad appeal and good reviews. That's thanks no doubt in part to the delightful Nikki DeLoach. The former Mouseketeer plays Lacey Hamilton, the cool and sexy mother of the show's stropky star. She's also guest-starring in an episode of *CSI* set to air May 1. From a baseball field in Georgia, she talked about why you should tune in to *Awkward*, coming up with Justin Timberlake, struggling in show business, and wardrobe enhancement.

ESQUIRE.COM: How are you?

NIKKI DELOACH: I'm doing great. I'm actually in Athens, Georgia, right now, hanging out with my best friend. My brother plays baseball for UGA, so I've flown into town to try and catch some of his baseball game.

ESQ: Are you sitting in the bleachers right now?

ND: No, does it sound like I'm in the bleachers? *[Laughs.]*

ESQ: It seemed like you just hopped on a phone call, watching the game.

ND: I just finished walking with my girlfriend through a park. We're just hanging out today.

ESQ: That sounds lovely. I can hear a little Southern accent.

ND: Especially since I've been down here, it comes out immediately. I don't ever want to lose it, but for on-camera stuff I have to pay attention.

ESQ: Is it hard to cover up?

ND: Actually no. I'm so used to jumping in and out of it. I learned how to get rid of the Southern accent when I was like 11 years old and living in New York for the summer doing modeling and commercials

and auditioning for Broadway. The mother I lived with for the summer taught me how to drop my Southern accent.

ESQ: I had never seen *Awkward* before preparing for this. I was pleasantly surprised.

ND: Thank you so much. I really appreciate it. I've done a lot of bad TV and bad movies. I've also done some really great things. *Awkward* is a show I'm proud to tell people to watch. And most of the time people are like, "No, I watched it, and it's fantastic." And even if they're more of a *Breaking Bad* or *Game of Thrones* type of person, they can appreciate that it's well-written and well-done and it'll make them giggle.

ESQ: I'm not sure if our readership is the target audience.

ND: My character shows up, she's scantily clad, so maybe there's an audience for that...

ESQ: There are a lot of tank tops...

ND: Tank tops, bathing suits, bikinis. She likes to dress inappropriately.

ESQ: So you were a child actor.

ND: I've been doing this my whole life. I'm not gonna lie. It's never been easy. It's a tough, tough industry, and you really have to believe in yourself. And some days you wake up, and you're like, *I don't know if I have it in me to be told "no" again for the thousandth time.* But I love it so much, and the fact that I can say I have been a working actor for the majority of my time in the industry — I feel very lucky.

ESQ: It seems like there's this group of working actresses — you'll find them on episodes of *CSI*, which you've been on. It's a fascinating life. Maybe not the most secure all the time?

ND: No, you're right, it's not the most secure. You don't know what the future's gonna bring. I've had to figure out other ways to supplement my income at times just to continue what I love to do. The bottom line is along the way you have to figure out what makes me happy outside this business. Because if you base your happiness on this industry and being successful, you're going to be let down at some point in time. It took me a little while to learn that, but once I figured that out, everything got a whole lot easier.

ESQ: Plus, if you were working a nine-to-five, you couldn't make it to your brother's Monday baseball game.

ND: Yeah! The last few years it's been really hard because we literally shoot *Awkward* during his baseball season. This year, since we're doing 20 episodes, we're taking a 28-day hiatus. So on the hiatus, when I had found out my date, I immediately booked my ticket to Athens. I was like, when can I go during that month and how many games can I get in in that amount of time? I got in on the red-eye Friday morning, and I saw a game Friday night, Saturday, Sunday night, and then tomorrow night we're playing Georgia Tech, and I'm leaving the next day to fly back for press for the new season.

ESQ: How old is your brother?

ND: My brother is 22. There's 11 years difference between myself and him. And my sister and I are three years apart, so it was like starting all over for the family. He's the best thing. He's our baby.

ESQ: I can imagine in the stands there are some 19-to-23-year-old guys who are fans of *Awkward* but may not admit it.

ND: It's so weird because I've mostly been able to live a life of anonymity, but now, everywhere I've gone, whether it's the yogurt shop or baseball field, girls and guys have recognized me and said, "Aren't you on that show?" Honestly, it's not about me. I just play a character that's on the show. It's really about the show and the fact that people love the show. It lets me know that maybe I'll get one more year of employment out of it.

ESQ: You're playing basically the youngest mom to a 16-year-old in America. Why?

ND: That's a really good question. It is kind of weird. I remember when I first auditioned for the show, and a lot of my other actress friends who are my age were like, "Oh, I wouldn't do that. I'm not ready to play a mom." And I was like, you know, I really don't care. This role comes along once in a lifetime. I'm going for it. Thank God MTV thought I was old enough to play the mother, because if not, I wouldn't have this job. She's one of my favorite characters I've ever played in my life. She's so outrageous and ridiculous.

ESQ: It must be weird, too, to be in your early thirties and be one of the older people on the show.

ND: That was more strange than anything else, to be called "Momma Nikki" on set. I was like, wait a second, I don't even have my own child yet.

ESQ: Can you keep up with the 17-year-olds these days?

ND: What are 17-year-olds doing these days? That beats me. I have no idea, and honestly, I don't know if I want to know. That scares me a bit.

ESQ: You started on *Mickey Mouse Club* with Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake, right?

ND: I did. I started with a group of people I was cast in. There were seven of us. There was Justin Timberlake and Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears and Ryan Gosling and myself and a guy named Tate Lynche, who went on to dance on Broadway — he's an incredible dancer — and another kid named T.J. Fantini. It's crazy, right?

ESQ: Yeah, were you buddies with them? I can't imagine the setup with hormonal 13-year-olds.

ND: Yeah, actually Justin was my best friend on that show. We were only a year apart, and from the casting camp we immediately hit it off. We wanted to stay in the same housing complex when we moved down to Orlando for the first season, and since then we've remained really good friends. His family is my extended family.

ESQ: That's fantastic.

ND: Yeah, he's a great guy.

ESQ: So there's no Mickey Mouse Club e-mail chain going on.

ND: No. [Laughs.] He's really the only one from that group of seven I still keep in touch with.

ESQ: Can you imagine if you had ended up on Britney Spears's path?

ND: No. Honestly, when all of their careers were blowing up, I was really feeling forgotten and left behind. I was working so hard for something and not seeing — they were seeing results, and I wasn't seeing anything, and I really was wondering what did I do wrong and what are they doing right? And I look at that and I go, I don't know. I don't know what it would have done to me if I didn't have failures, lots of failures when I was younger. Because it really humbled me and made me so grateful for any work that I do have, and it forever changed me. I'll never be the same person because I really learned what it was like to fail and be able to know that I can always pick myself up and know that life's really not about constantly being at the top of the mountain. Life's more than that. It's about family and friends and loving yourself, and having a career is just the icing on top of a really good cake. And who knows? I could have ended up going through rough phases in the public eye, and my heart goes out to her, and she seems to be doing so well right now, and deservedly so.

ESQ: You sound like a normal, healthy person. You can still make it down to Georgia and be a real person, so I think you won out in the end.

ND: Yeah, I kinda feel that way. There's some days, like, man, I wish I had a million bucks to help this person or to buy a car because mine's falling apart. But at the end of the day, I'm doing okay.

ESQ: So why should everyone who's reading this watch *Awkward*?

ND: *Awkward* is a mixture of *Freaks and Geeks* and *My So Called Life*.

ESQ: Good start.

ND: I think there's really an audience for both male and female viewers, because even though it is a female voice, it highlights the male perspective. Everybody remembers what it's like to be in high school. We really never leave those years behind. We have two great guys on the show, Beau Mirchoff who plays Matty, and Brett Davern who plays Jake, who are really the living incarnation of what a lot of guys' experiences were like in high school. It's going to make you laugh, whether you want to laugh or not. There was this 45-year-old man who was sitting in one of my friend's office buildings, and he was watching MTV, and my friend was like, "Oh, you're watching MTV," and he's like, "Yeah, I have two daughters who watch *Teen Mom*, but you know what show you should really watch? *Awkward*. It's my favorite show on TV." If you give it a chance, you're gonna find that you like it. Outside of that, there are the tank tops and my breasts, which are enhanced on the show in a really amazing, spectacular way. [Laughs.] So if not for the quality of the show and the laughs, tune in for the breasts.

ESQ: So credit to the costume department?

ND: Exactly. They do such a great job because I don't have them in real life.

Read the interview here:

<https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/interviews/a32998/nikki-delolach-awkward-interview/>

SHARP

LOOK BETTER
FEEL BETTER
KNOW MORE

Nikki DeLoach Is Living a Wonderful Life



It still feels a bit too early to talk about Christmas movies (we're looking at you, **Cristina Rosato**), but luckily, actress Nikki DeLoach comes bearing these summertime-themed photos to soften the blow of her new holiday movie *A Dream of Christmas*.

"It's essentially a retelling of *It's A Wonderful Life* in today's world, with a woman instead of George Bailey," says DeLoach. "Life is not the way my character thought it would be at this stage of the game, so she asks for a different one and learns a lesson. It's all about the lessons."

DeLoach learned some lessons of her own early on in her career. As a child, she starred in *The Mickey Mouse Club* at the same time as its most notable alums Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera and Ryan Gosling.

"It never felt like work, I was just waking up and going to play with my best friends," says DeLoach. "It just so happens I was also singing, dancing, and acting every day too. Everything I learned from that experience about being an entertainer and telling stories you can't learn anywhere else. It was amazing."



Who was your childhood celebrity crush?

Harrison Ford. I liked older men. I was obsessed with *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* growing up so, he was *it*.

What is your guilty pleasure?

Definitely wine. French fries, cheeseburgers, and probably reality TV, too. I love *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette*, *Bachelor in Paradise*, all of them. I would give anything to take Chris Harrison's job for just one season. Could you imagine how fun that would be?

Who would you love to work with?

As an actor, the ultimate is obviously Meryl Streep. Also, Julianne Moore because I think she is absolutely phenomenal. Outside of acting, on a philanthropic level, Michelle Obama. She is just so inspiring and so smart and so strong. I would show up to any organization or any fundraiser that she is doing. I would pick up trash for her if I had to.

What is your secret talent?

I'm a good cook. I'm a *really* good cook. My signature dishes would be my Georgia Caviar, which is like a salsa, and my chocolate chip pecan pie.

What are you afraid of?

Before having a son there were so many different things that I was afraid of. Now, all of those fears are gone. The only thing I am ever really afraid of is something happening to him. It's just too much to comprehend and I almost shut down in fear just thinking about it.

What never fails to make you laugh?

[Laughs.] Farts! Farts are funny. They are really funny. I would say that and probably John Oliver.

I love that you couldn't even say "farts" without laughing.

They've been so funny to me since I was a child! Farts. [Laughs.]



What are you awful at?

Math. Oh my gosh. Math. I am so bad at it. Economics. That's another one. Math and economics. Just kill me now.

Lastly, what has been your strangest fan encounter?

I have a really high tolerance for strangeness, so nothing ever really bothers me. I have a memory, but it's more so embarrassing for me. I went into a CVS one night back when I was heavily pregnant, my hair was wet and in a bun, and just looking so bad. Someone came up to me and said she loved me on *Awkward* and asked if I'd take a picture with her. And I did! Never mind that I as pregnant as I can possibly be, I'm also holding a gigantic box of diapers that I couldn't even be bothered to put down. She posted it on social media and I was horrified. It's the one moment in my life where I wish I hadn't taken a picture with someone, but there it is.

Read the interview here:

<http://sharpmagazine.com/2016/11/18/nikki-deloadch-is-living-a-wonderful-life/>

SELF

Awkward Actress Nikki DeLoach Shares Her Secret for Slim Arms

CELEB MOVE TO STEAL



Nikki DeLoach, who stars as Lacey Hamilton on MTV's *Awkward* (which premieres tonight at 10 PM EST) knows a thing or two about being a hot mom! The actress, who just had a baby boy in October, said she got on track to getting her body back by simply being kind and compassionate to herself. After starting off with daily walks (sometimes with little Hudson in tow!) she slowly began mixing yoga and Pilates into her workout routine.

So when she gets down to working out with Kitchen, she loves toning up her delts, shoulders and triceps with the "Bow and Arrow" move. (Because, don't we all need a little **Katniss Everdeen** in our exercise routines??)

"I like feeling strong," says DeLoach. "[This move] allows me to build long, lean, feminine muscles." Heck yeah — strong, sexy, feminine?! We're adding this move to our sexy arm exercise arsenal, stat!

THE MOVE: Bow and Arrow



Holding a 4-lb. U bar in each hand, stand hip distance apart. Bring left arm up and straight as right arm comes up sliding along waist-side. As you lower right arm, switch sides, and lift the left along the side. Do 15 reps, lifting both side

Read the interview here:

<https://www.self.com/story/cmts-nikki-dealach-awkward>

ENEWS

Ready to Launch: Inside Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera & Ryan Gosling's Darling *Mickey Mouse Club* Days



If there was ever any doubt about the magic of Disney, just look at who the Mouse House launched into stardom 25 years ago.

It was 1993 when young [Britney Spears](#), [Justin Timberlake](#), [Christina Aguilera](#) and [Ryan Gosling](#) joined *The All-New Mickey Mouse Club* in its sixth season on the Disney Channel, and these four future superstars really were brand new to the world of showbiz.

Sure, Justin, Britney and Christina had been on *Star Search*, but they were all eliminated before the final rounds. Not even little Ryan had *Barney*-equivalent acting experience on par with what [Demi Lovato](#) and [Selena Gomez](#) would bring to the table in the early 2000s—and not one of these tween-aged Mouseketeers came from a famous family à la [Miley Cyrus](#).



Rick R. Photography

Nikki remains "really good friends" with Justin and keeps in touch with many fellow Mouseketeers. She and Dale, who runs the *MMC* alumni and fan group [Always in the Club](#), are among the former Disney stars [planning a reunion](#) in the spring.

Exact details about this Mickey Mouse Club get-together are still under wraps, but it's taking place in Orlando, and everyone's invited. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Always In The Club Foundation, which is a nonprofit founded by Dale with support from other former Mouseketeers to help meet the United Nation's Global Goal of Quality Education through youth mentoring and the arts.

"Most of what I do today—in philanthropy, in socially conscious business, in acting...is a direct result of the mentorship and the experiences and the training that I had on the Mouse Club," says Dale. And he credits the *MMC* for helping him and his fellow Mouseketeers to develop an incredible work ethic early on.

Read the article here:

<https://www.eonline.com/news/969444/ready-to-launch-inside-britney-spears-justin-timberlake-christina-aguilera-ryan-gosling-s-darling-mickey-mouse-club-days>



'Awkward' Star Teases 'Darker' season



Based off the trailer, it's clear the fall season of *Awkward* will be the most emotional yet as Jenna falls under Collin's questionable spell and discards her friends in favor of drugs, drinking and debauchery. This turn of events threatens to disrupt my favorite *Awkward* pairing as parenting becomes intensely trickier for Lacey in the ensuing episodes.

The storyline presented a uniquely odd issue for actress Nikki DeLoach, who was pregnant with her first child for the entirety of filming the 10-episode conclusion to season three. And with her baby due any day, ETonline caught up with her to talk about the show hitting close to home, obscuring her ever-growing baby bump on screen and why Lacey might surprise some fans this season!

ETonline: Congratulations on your pregnancy, how have you been feeling?

Nikki DeLoach: Look, I'm a very honest person. I'm not going to tell you it's been all roses and sunshowers. Being pregnant has been tough, for me, at least. I spent the first 5 months really sick and then the baby decided to drop on my sciatic nerve. It's beautiful and it's amazing when you actually think about what's happening; it's so profound. I've never been through something so humbling and empowering at the same time. But the actual process of pregnancy is not my favorite.

ETonline: How much of your pregnancy was captured on-screen?

DeLoach: 7 months of it! Part of me is excited to see that, but most of me is like, "Oh no!" I put on so much water weight, it's not going to be attractive at all, and Lacey is so consumed by how she looks. The breasts have to be perfect, the waist has to be perfect, the clothes have to be tight, tight, tight. Bless our costume designer because clothing Lacey while me being pregnant had to be the biggest challenge for her! Especially when we got to month six of hiding the baby but being honest to Lacey's aesthetic. That was a challenge.

ETonline: Does Lacey end up carrying a lot of laundry baskets this season?

Deloach: Oh yes. So much laundry. She's doing laundry all the time [laughs]. In one episode I'm so covered with blankets and pillows the only thing you see is my head [laughs]. I have to say, the first 4 months were really difficult because I didn't tell people on the set I was pregnant. I mean, I would vomit in my mouth and swallow it. I know that's so gross, but it's true. Thankfully my brother-in-law works on the show, and he knew, so he would come pull me out of my trailer. The cast is such a family and we share our lives, so the hardest part was not sharing what I was going through.

ETonline: This will be a very dramatic season, was it odd to be going through that with your on-screen child while also pregnant yourself?

Deloach: Oh man, the Jenna and Lacey situation is tough this season. Lacey has to be a disciplinarian and here I am thinking, "One day I will very likely face all these situations with my real child." I don't think the answer is about avoiding that, it's about getting through the hard times together. It's not about the mistakes you make, it's about how you recover and that's kind of the message of this season.

ETonline: Were you surprised by how Lacey reacted to Jenna's behavior in any way?

Deloach: Not surprised in the sense that she actually steps up to the plate. When Lacey's back is up against the wall, she steps up because Lacey has always been the one who is there for Jenna. Even with her inadequate skillset, Jenna has always been Lacey's rock and she is not going to want to lose her daughter. She will do everything possible to keep Jenna healthy, happy and stable. Knowing Lacey the way I do, I wasn't surprised, but I think the audience might be. Lacey has failed in the past so they may realize that she actually knows how to be a disciplinarian. I love that we're showing that side of her this season.

ETonline: What are you excited for the audience to see this season?

Deloach: I'm excited for them to see Jenna and Lacey in a whole new light, but mostly I'm excited for the audience to see how the characters recover from the mistakes they make.

ETonline: What are you excited for the audience to see this season?

Deloach: I'm excited for them to see Jenna and Lacey in a whole new light, but mostly I'm excited for the audience to see how the characters recover from the mistakes they make. I've learned the biggest life lessons from stepping in a pile of poop and figuring out how to get myself out of it. heaviness of the stories we're telling, but we still manage to make it light-hearted.

Read the interview here:

https://www.etonline.com/tv/139859_Nikki_Deloach_Awkward_Season_3_Interview



Keck's Exclusives: *Awkward* Changes



When MTV's *Awkward* returns for a fourth season on April 15, it will be time for high school graduation. That means several characters will be heading off to college. "And not just the younger students," teases **Nikki Deloach**, 34, whose Lacey will sign up for classes years after having used her college money for breast implants. But rather than focusing on getting her degree, Lacey is interested in "boys, parties and drinking," Deloach says.

The college storyline has been particularly fun for actress and real-life University of Southern California senior **Greer Grammer**. "On the show, the girls go party at the Kappa Gamma house, and I happen to be a Kappa Kappa Gamma in real life," Grammer says. Lissa will also get a new brother, Tyler, when her parents adopt the child, who is African-American. "Lissa thinks he's 2 months old, but he's 18 [years old]," Grammer says. "He may turn out to be her love interest, so that's a little scandalous." Not to mention extremely awkward!

Read the interview here:

<https://www.tvguide.com/news/kecks-exclusives-awkward-1077104/>



Awkward's Nikki DeLoach Gives Birth to Baby Boy Hudson



Awkward, **Nikki DeLoach** is a mom now! The 34-year-old *Awkward.* actress welcomed her first child, a baby boy, with husband **Ryan Goodell** on Tuesday, Oct. 22, her rep confirms exclusively to [Us Weekly](#).

The MTV star and entertainment lawyer, married since September 2009, named their son William Hudson Goodell, but he will go by the name Hudson. He was born at 3:19 a.m. in Los Angeles and weighed in at 6 pounds, 15 ounces and is 21 inches long. "Mom and baby are doing well," the rep said in a statement to Us, "and the new parents are overjoyed at the arrival of their first child.

Coincidentally, little William made his entrance into the world the same day as the third mid-season premiere of his mom's series, *Awkward.* On the show, DeLoach plays Lacey Hamilton, the young mother of **Ashley Rickards'** Jenna Hamilton. In a recent interview with [MTV](#), the pregnant star explained, "Moving forward, having a kid is only going to enhance all of my acting in all types of ways because I'll be feeling things I've never felt before."

DeLoach also shared what she was looking forward to about becoming a mother. "I know that this is going to change my life, and change my heart forever -- it already has," she said. "Your love grows bigger and bigger, and I didn't even realize I had the capacity to love something so much. I can only imagine how much bigger that's going to get when I see his little face."

Read the article here:

<https://www.usmagazine.com/celebrity-moms/news/awkwards-nikki-deloach-gives-birth-to-baby-boy-hudson-20132210/>

'Awkward' Actress Nikki DeLoach Talks Season 4,



Anyone who watches "Awkward" knows that Jenna's mother is a little ... out of the ordinary. She's young, hip and anything but strict. As a plastic surgery-loving, ex-popular girl who would love to re-live her high school days, Lacey Hamilton may not be the world's most capable mother, but that just makes for entertaining television.

Lacey has come a long way since we first met her. She's no Carol Brady, but she is definitely not the same mother who wrote Jenna the infamous Care-frontation letter. HuffPost TV spoke with actress Nikki DeLoach about how her character has changed and matured

over the series' first three seasons as well as what we can expect to see from her in the upcoming fourth.

What's next for Lacey in Season 4?

She's really coming into her own. She's wondering, "When Jenna's gone, what does that mean for me and my life? Where am I supposed to go and who am I?" Just as her daughter has pondered the question, "Who am I and who do I want to be?" Lacey is now where her daughter was in previous seasons and she's wondering that for herself."

Was Lacey previously trying to live vicariously through Jenna or was she just trying to encourage Jenna to have the same happiness she had in high school?

All of the above. High school was so great for Lacey and she experienced a fall from grace when she got pregnant and became a teen mom. While she loved her daughter, she also felt a big burden because she had so many dreams and so many things she wanted to do with her life, and now she had a child and her whole life became her child, so she had to leave that all behind and leave college behind.

She was giving Jenna advice through the lens of what she had experienced in her own life instead of letting Jenna figure out who she was outside of who Lacey was.

What frustrates you about Lacey?

Sometimes she gets very superficial and only sees things on a surface level. But at the same time, no one changes overnight; sometimes we take five steps forward only to take 10 steps back, because patterns are really hard to break.

Give me a quick and easy summary of what's coming up in Season 4.

It's supersized. Everything's a little bigger. We're at more locations, there are new cast members and there's lots of stuff going on with senior year.

Read the interview here:

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/nikki-delouch-awkward_n_5093822

Interview: Nikki DeLoach Talks "Awkward" and Being on Mickey Mouse Club With Justin Timberlake



Parents can be really embarrassing and actress **Nikki DeLoach** is no stranger to that. On MTV's *Awkward*, DeLoach plays Lacey Hamilton, Jenna's (**Ashley Rickards**) forever-young mom who's still trying to live the dream. Case in point: she ditches the soccer mom stereotype for T-shirts so tight they'd make any child cringe and forgoes college to use the cash for a boob job. In real life, DeLoach couldn't be further from the notoriously high-maintenance and irresponsible parent she plays. DeLoach actually missed our first scheduled interview to attend a "baby breakdown emergency." In other words, she's got her priorities straight.

Ahead of tomorrow's *Awkward* mid-season finale, DeLoach took some time to speak to us about the hit MTV series, her days on *Mickey Mouse Club* alongside **Justin Timberlake** and **Christina Aguilera**, and what it was like opening for **Britney Spears**.

How did you land the role of Lacey Hamilton?

When the audition came through, I had passed on it about two or three times. I thought I

was too young. [Laughs.] That year, for pilot season, I had been going in to play the roles of moms and every time I would go in, casting directors would say, "She's not old enough to play a mom." I got this role [as Lacey], mom of a 15-year-old and I said, "I'm not even wasting my time. I'm not going in." Finally my agent said, "Nikki, they said that they know how old you are. They really want you to go in."

How has playing Lacey affected your role as a mother?

Playing Lacey has taught me a lot of things and one of those things is that you learn from your kids as much as they learn from you. Lacey and Jenna have the dynamic that sometimes Jenna is the adult in the scenario. You learn about patience and you learn a lot about who you are. I'm the mom of a seven-month-old and I've learned a lot about who I am. Some of it good, some of it not so good. [Laughs.]

What's the biggest difference between Lacey and yourself?

We're so totally completely different. I'm a country girl. I was raised on a farm. I'd rather be barefoot or with boots and jeans on and have a Coors light in my hand and Lacey is *Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. The one thing we have alike that I think grounds Lacey as a person is the fact that her heart is so big and she is so well-intentioned. She has an inadequate skill set sometimes, but she always means well.

How has your relationship with the cast grown over the course of the show?

I've been in this business long enough to know the magic that has happened from the cast and the show doesn't happen all the time. Desi Lydic, who plays Val, is one of my best friends. Jillian Rose Reed lives down the street from me and is over at my house all the time. It's going to be so hard one day when the show ends! The fact that we won't go to work and see each other every day. I just don't want to think about that right now.

What do you and Jillian do for fun when she visits?

These days she comes over and hangs out with my child. [Laughs.]

We spoke to Jillian awhile back and she told us about behind-the-scenes pranking. Is that still a thing?

We haven't actually had a lot of pranking this season. It used to happen a lot because of Brett Davern, who plays Jake. He's the set prankster.

Do you remember any big pranks?

Brett and Jillian blew up a million balloons and shoved them all inside my car and posted signs all along the outside of it. [Laughs.] I literally could not get my car. I just got rid of the car last year, but I was still finding balloons in it like a year later.

What can we expect for the rest of season?

It's senior year and this season we're taking it all the way up to spring break and it's just a lot of fun senior activities. Of course there is the Matty and Jenna drama. Will they be together? Will they not be together? It's really fun. Last year, the show followed Jenna on this dark path. This season we brought back a lot of the fun of the show.

How would you say *Awkward* influences teens alongside other shows like *Faking It* that tackle tough subjects, but ultimately relay a positive message?

Awkward is in a class all its own, compared to any other teen shows on television. From day one, it was really important for our creators and our writers to not only bring the funny, but to also bring the tears. As much as 15-year-olds want to laugh, they also want to cry and they want to feel understood and they don't want to feel alone. *Awkward* does that in such an authentic way. Yes, there's a lot of comedy and some situations are heightened because it's TV, but in general people love the show because it feels genuine.

PLAYING LACEY HAS TAUGHT ME A LOT OF THINGS AND ONE OF THOSE THINGS IS THAT YOU LEARN FROM YOUR KIDS AS MUCH AS THEY LEARN FROM YOU.

You were also on the *Mickey Mouse Club*. Were there certain members of the cast that brought out the best in you?

If I was doing a skit with comedy, Lindsey Alley and Rhona Bennett were always so much fun to work with. I loved performing with Matt [Morris] and Justin [Timberlake] because they were such good dancers and such good singers. Everyone was so talented that they all taught you something about being an entertainer.

Did you look up to any artists at the time for inspiration?

I looked up to everyone, including the kids younger than me. How can you hear Christina Aguilera sing and not be in awe and be inspired by that? I knew I had my own thing going on, meaning, I was never going to have a voice like Christina. There were things I knew that were not me.

What was it like breaking away from MMC and forming your music group, Innosense?

It was a little bit darker, to be honest. The music business wasn't for me, but I loved some of the experiences I got to have. I got to tour the country and tour so many parts in Europe and I got to live in Germany. I got to play Madison Square Garden and open for Britney [Spears] and N*SYNC. It was an amazing time and at the end of the day, the way our group ended was really sad. Lou Pearlman had signed us, Backstreet Boys, N*SYNC, and everyone. Groups who had already achieved a certain level of success by the time Lou's schemes and scams had been found out were able to continue to have success and groups that hadn't lost their record contracts because of what he was doing. Now he's in jail. I look back and I'm grateful it ended when it did because I feel it was just supposed to be this small part of my life and I was supposed to grow and learn and have some great experiences and just move on.

What was it like opening for Britney and N*SYNC? How crazy were the fans?

It was incredible! I love to perform. That's why I went into the music industry. With that said, performing in front of 60,000 people who are all N*SYNC fans or Britney fans, that's like performing on steroids. Not many people get to do that. It was an amazing time to be on tour with two huge pop groups who were experiencing unheard of levels of fame and popularity at the time.

Read the interview here:

<https://www.complex.com/pop-culture/2014/06/nikki-deload-mickey-mouse-club-award-interview>



Op-Ed: Democracy Is a Participatory Sport; So Get in the Game and Vote

Actress Nikki DeLoach points out the importance of suiting up, showing up and casting your ballot.



MTV's 'Awkward' mom Nikki DeLoach says it's time to get off the couch and into the game. Go outside and vote. (Photo: Elisabeth Caren)

When I sat down to write this piece on the importance of voting, I immediately began listing off all the reasons why voting is a necessary action that cannot be overstated. However, most of us—including our non-voting citizens—have already been lectured about the various reasons of why we should vote.

By the way, I passionately support listing all of those arguments, from the historical fight for the right to vote, to the fact that many civil leaders, women, and soldiers died while securing this gift for themselves and for future generations, to the fact that some of this election cycle's biggest issues (war, education funding, jobs, women's reproductive rights, environmental concerns...) will directly effect the youth and therefore the future of our nation.

Still, I considered, "What line of reasoning could I possibly present that would encourage the non-voting percentage to get to the polls this election season?"

Being the sports fan that I am, I immediately thought—football. That's right, folks...football.

First of all, 'tis the season! Like millions of Americas, I too have football on the brain. Secondly, I also happen to be a sucker for sports analogies. Now, I know what you might be thinking—how could football possibly be a viable analogy for one of the most critical and fundamental aspects of our democratic process?

Democracy is a participatory sport. Without players, there is no game. Furthermore, in order to have a balanced democracy, or a fair and balanced game, ALL players must show up and participate fully.

When you cast your vote at the polls, you are not just choosing a candidate; you are making a decision about issues that will affect not only your life, but also the lives of future generations.

I am going to use one of the NFL's strongest teams this football season as an example for my analogy: the Houston Texans. The Texans quite possibly have the most balanced team in the NFL, with both a powerful and effective offense and defense. That is why they are leading the pack and are a Super Bowl favorite. While they do possess one of the greatest running backs in the NFL, Arian Foster, he couldn't run the ball without the handoff from quarterback Matt Schaub. Schaub would be incapable of that handoff, or of distributing the ball to talented wide receivers such as Andre Johnson, without the fortification of his offensive line.

The Texans also have one of the top five best defenses in the league. I could go on and on, but I believe you get the picture. The secret to the success of the Texans is the fact that each and every person on that team, both offense and defense, [shows up and participates fully](#).

At the end of the day, each citizen in this country is on the same team—Team United States of America. Let's say Republicans are the defense and Democrats are the offense (or vice versa). Either way, we need every team member, every citizen, to show up on Election Day and fully participate in this political Super Bowl.

Not to diminish the feelings of victory or loss that occurs at the end of an NFL game, but there is much more at stake in this Presidential election than fantasy football points. When you cast your vote at the polls, you are not just choosing a candidate; you are making a decision about issues that will affect not only your life, but also the lives of future generations. It's your health care, education, environment, highways, social security, jobs and economy, your [Supreme Court Justices](#), the reproductive issues of the women you know, and issues affecting LGBT people who are your neighbors and family members.



Nikki DeLoach shares about her start as one of six in the Mickey Mouse club along with Britney, Christina and Justin Timberlake. What it was like to be NSYNC's JC Chasez's girlfriend while he was on tour. She then had her own girl group where she was financially screwed over by music manager and convicted felon Lou Pearlman. Nikki shares about what it was like to be a working child performer and teenager and why she came out unscathed. We get into her Hallmark movies, how they are written and her opinion of former Hallmark Star Lori Loughlin's role in the college admission scandal.

Watch the interview here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NAGPpMKMyM>





Hallmarkies: Actress Nikki DeLoach Interview

Today Rachel had the honor of talking to Hallmark actress Nikki DeLoach and we covered a lot of ground and had an incredible conversation.

Listen to the podcast here:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/hallmarkies-actress-nikki-deloch-interview/id1296728288?i=1000436030715>



Nikki DeLoach Interview: Love Takes Flight | Hallmark Channels' Bubbly Sesh



Nostalgic Christmas Recap with Guest: Nikki DeLoach

Listen to the 1st interview here:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/nikki-deloch-interview-love-takes-flight-hallmark/id1446939961?i=1000436421128>

Listen to the 2nd interview here:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/nostalgic-christmas-recap-with-guest-nikki-deloch/id1446939961?i=1000455673551>



067: Nikki Deloach — What We Are Co-Founder, Actress and Musician, Candidly Pulls Back the Veil On a 30-Year Career E

What We Are co-founder, actress, musician and producer Nikki Deloach shares the brave, beautiful, tenacious, unforgettable career moments that shaped her 30-year career. This woman is a purposeful, driven and talented storyteller but more importantly, she is one who prioritizes vulnerability and openness. She shares the highs and lows of being a veteran of both the music and film industry, from the success of the cult classic 90's show *The Mickey Mouse Club* to losing everything and making a comeback and taking a break.

Nikki Deloach is best known for her portrayal of Lacey Hamilton on the hit and critically-acclaimed series *Awkward* for five seasons. Nikki's other credits include *Love & Other Drugs*, *North Shore*, *Windfall*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *Mad Men*. When she is not busy showcasing her talent onscreen, DeLoach is expanding her repertoire behind the scenes. She has re-teamed with Hallmark to develop and produce the upcoming Christmas project *Reunited at Christmas*, which she will also star in.

Nikki Deloach on Instagram: @nikdeloach

Listen to the podcast here:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/067-nikki-deloach-what-we-are-co-founder-actress-musician/id1262208420?i=1000428213052>