

## Carlson Young, Isom Innis

**Carlson Young:** First of all, I grossly underestimated the amount of just blood, sweat, and tears that the whole thing would take. But I have always been really obsessed with the idea that if a filmmaker has an extremely strong vision and discernment, it's pretty extraordinary. What you can pull off with not that much money.

[00:00:24] **Bryan Smith:** Brian Smith here and welcome to the Dream Path podcast, where I try to get inside the heads of talented creatives from all over the world. My goal is to demystify and humanize the creative process and make it accessible to everyone. Now let's jump in. Every year around this time, I feature filmmakers whose films premiere at the Sundance film festival.

[00:00:47] And this year I had the honor to sit down with Carlson Young, and I submit us. Carlson is an actress, screenwriter, and director well known for her role as Brooke Maddix on "Scream", the TV series, as well as numerous other television and film roles. Carlson made her directorial debut with her short film, "The Blazing World", which premiered at Sundance in 2018.

[00:01:09] She then co-wrote a feature-length script for the blazing world with Pierce Brown and despite a global pandemic managed to direct and star in this film shooting in August of 2020 and wrapping in time to make the deadline for submission to the 2021 Sundance film festival where it premiered just a few weeks ago.

[00:01:28] Carlson's husband Isom Innis from the multi-platinum selling band "Foster the People" scored the short and feature length version of "The Blazing World". I was able to see "The Blazing World" before the interview. And it's nothing like any movie I've seen starring Dermot Mulroney, Vanessa Shaw, John Karna, and Soco.

[00:01:47] The film follows Margaret, a self-destructive woman who returns to her family home years after the accidental drowning of her twin sister and finds herself drawn to an alternate dimension where her sister may still be alive. This film is beautifully shot by cinematographer, Shane F. Kelly who also shot "Boyhood" and "A Scanner Darkly" and has some powerful performances with themes that explore the impact of childhood trauma on individuals and families.

[00:02:13] In this interview, you will hear Carlson talk about the genesis of "The Blazing World" script, how she cast the film and how she and Isom approached the score and song choices to achieve the tone and feel of a fantasy film with horror elements. They also talk about the challenges they faced as newcomers to the feature filmmaking community, the challenges of creating music and film in a pandemic, the importance of film festivals like Sundance and what projects Carlson is working on currently.

[00:02:42] So without further ado, let's jump into my chat with Carlson Young and Isom Innis, Carlson, Young Isom Innis. Welcome to dream path podcast.

[00:02:51] **Isom Innis:** Thanks so much.

[00:02:53] **Bryan Smith:** I watched the film and lovely film by the way. And I haven't seen anything like, it, it kind of reminded me a little bit of like a "Pan's Labyrinth" type of immersion in a completely different,

[00:03:08] **Carlson Young:** yeah, definitely.

[00:03:10] **Bryan Smith:** Tell us where that world came from, what was inspiring you, what was driving you toward that narrative?

[00:03:18] **Carlson Young:** Yeah. What drove me towards the narrative was learning about my own personal life, learning about processing trauma and how the brain stores childhood trauma, and the fact that trauma doesn't have a sense of time, which is kind of often, right. I think childhood trauma doesn't, as an adult, we say, you know, "that happened so long ago", like why at- that doesn't affect me anymore. But the reality is, is it, it did affect you and it's stored somewhere in your body. So the more that I learned about what neuroscience has to say about trauma propelled me to keep exploring that. And then from a narrative perspective, I was really inspired by, "Bluebeard", and the key narrative kind of came out of "Bluebeard" for me.

[00:04:08] **Bryan Smith:** And what is Bluebeard?

[00:04:10] **Carlson Young:** Yeah. Bluebeard is a so 17th century, kind of folk tale, about this kind of evil menacing man with this blue is blue beard. That was, a young woman away from her family and makes her come live in his, you know, castle, with hundreds of rooms. And he gives her the keys to the castle, and he tells her that she can go into any room in an, in the castle that she wants, but not that this one room, but he gives her the key to it anyway.

[00:04:45] So if he goes out hunting and she, you know, is curious and opens the one door that he told her not to. And she finds, you know, carnage of all of the wives that he's murdered before her. She sees she sees the truth. And, after that, the key won't stop bleeding because you know, her inner knowing now knows the truth.

[00:05:07] So I was really inspired by that and I felt like. The psychic keys of going deeper and deeper into our subconscious, what unlocks, what, like, what do you have to get from the mother to get to the father? You know? and then ultimately, what is, you know, your, your sort of key.

[00:05:29] **Bryan Smith:** Thank you for that. Backstory of the, the inspiration, the key makes complete sense. Now the Blackbeard story that you described sounds like a really dark beauty and the beast.

[00:05:40] **Carlson Young:** Yes, it is. I mean, it's kind of where it comes from, you know?

[00:05:44] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. And so, your creative writing background, I would imagine that you really benefited from that formal training and creative writing to be able to tap into your own original narratives.

[00:05:56] **Carlson Young:** Yeah. I was writing a paper on Margaret Cavendish when I started, you know, conceptualizing the short and outlining the feature. So, I was reading

glazing world and I was looking at Margaret Cavendish just from writing a research paper on her. And so I was really just inspired by her as a woman and then just the fact that she's, you know, technically considered to have written the first Sci-Fi kind of fantasy thing in 1666, and so I just found all of that really interesting and the prose novel that is "The Blazing World" is, you know, not the most readable thing, but what I noticed is she was reordering. And that kind of directly coincided with what I was learning about trauma.

[00:06:44] **Bryan Smith:** Margaret Cavendish, the first time I heard about her was studying up for this interview and looking at your previous interviews and I'm like, wow, what a source material to go to 1666 pros. My goodness.

[00:06:58] **Carlson Young:** Yes. It's not that accessible of a text. So I was really looking at it symbolically and kind of trying to understand like, Her husband was the, the scientist. And, you know, she was writing like a fantastical component to his scientific journal. And so I found kind of like, I was inspired by that because of, I assume I get so much inspiration from him. And so I'd love to be your little, your little freak.

[00:07:35] **Isom Innis:** Wow.

[00:07:37] **Bryan Smith:** The score certainly contributes completely to the mood and the tone of the film, just the field, the screeching of the violins during the, I assumed that it was a violent sound, like kind of the.

[00:07:50] **Isom Innis:** Yeah.

[00:07:50] **Bryan Smith:** But also you have this. Really nice weave of kind of modern pop music. I don't know if you would describe it as like maybe all pop music throughout like the bar scene where they're playing this very modern song, but you're weaving the orchestral part of it through the film and also the horror elements. So Isom, how did that work for you as a musician to step into the film world? And try to weave those elements to create the tone and feel of this.

[00:08:24] **Isom Innis:** Well, this is my first time scoring a full feature. I previously I've worked on Carlson's short and over the years, I've kind of contributed things here and there to other people's scores. And this was interesting because Carlson, she knows exactly what she wants musically, and she knows exactly what she doesn't want, but there were a few pieces written into the script already. The first one was the "Paus de deux" Tchaikovsky that starts the film, and the concluding piece of music was always supposed to be Panda Bears "Tropic of Cancer". And there's a really interesting dichotomy going on between those songs; because you have the romantic era Tchaikovsky that it starts in such a beautiful kind of, , I mean, it was written for the Nutcracker, so it has this kind of elegant fluidity to the beginning and then it starts to ramp up, but then kind of jumping forward a few hundred years, you have, this modern interpretation, like, and Panda Bear starts with the sample of harp from the, you know, the first 10 seconds of the "Paus de deux" so that was the sonic identity going into this whole thing. So when she first played me those pieces of music, I just listened to them a lot. And then I just started to think about how I can connect these two worlds and how can I create a palette that will fit and won't rub against Tchaikovsky and it'll,

it'll start in kind of the romantic era and then be able to kind of move its way into kind of modern sonics. So it was, it was, it was a learning experience. But it was, it was really fun. And it was great that Carson has such strong. Tastes because she, she was helping guide me through it.

[00:10:24] **Bryan Smith:** I would imagine it's nice to have a strong point of view in any project that you're in, kind of your guiding light, this perspective in this point of view about where you're going. With this being your first feature to score, did you have a sense of imposter syndrome at all? And I know you have the street cred and the credentials to do this technically, but brand-new arena for you. What were your feelings going into the project?

[00:10:51] **Isom Innis:** Yeah, for sure. I mean, that's something that, is just, I, I feel all the time. It was a lot of pressure and I'm really happy that the circumstances. Originally the band I play in, we were supposed to be on tour all of last year. And then when the pandemic hit all that got moved/canceled and it lended itself for me to get, to come to Austin where they were shooting and hang out, on the site, like on the set and get to just kind of absorb the energy. And I had. A lot of time to practice a lot of time for trial and error, a lot of time to build a palette of sounds. And I'm really thankful because I really needed it.

[00:11:42] **Carlson Young:** Yeah. It's so interesting to think about like the, the circumstances of the year and that, you know, I was supposed to have my, I was supposed to have Isom for a month, you know, to do the score and, with the way everything shook out just with the pandemic was like, "Oh, now, you know, you get to, you get to really be on site". And yeah, like you said, absorbing all of the energy in real time of what the shoot was like, and so you were kind of like composing in real time, which is really unique. And we weren't originally, you know, planning for that. So, it was pretty cool.

[00:12:23] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah, I've interviewed other film composers. And my understanding is they're brought in pretty much after the fact to deal with what is in the can basically. So what a privilege it is to just be involved in immersed in that project. And especially based upon my research, you were actually fairly quarantined during the shoot of this film. So, you're all living together, right. Or at least in close proximity. And I would imagine that sense of isolation. Contributed in some way toward how the film feels.

[00:12:58] **Carlson Young:** Yeah. I mean, yeah, we weren't, we were very much living together.

[00:13:04] **Bryan Smith:** So, the cast and crew, I mean, you've got some pretty big names in this film. You've got Dermot Moroni, you've got these big-name actors and they're all there on set, just willing to undergo all of these precautions to be part of your project. How did you manage to pull together this cast really impressive names and they gravitated toward your film for obvious reasons after you see it, the listeners will know why, but how did you manage to do that? Being that this is your first feature length film?

[00:13:39] **Carlson Young:** It's, it was not. Easy or quick, it took a lot of time and I had written the script for Udo Kier, and he was the first after that we had attached at the beginning of March. so, he, he contextualized everything for me, and he also made it real,

and I do think that. I worked my co-writer and I worked on this script for, you know, a year and a half of just refining it and distilling it and getting it as sharp as we possibly could. And so, you know, the script got to a place where I could confidently send it to other actors and say, you know, Like in Dermot's case, like I'm genuinely curious as to what you will do with this new role and same for Vanessa. And yeah, it takes a long time sometimes to assemble a cast like this. And it certainly did in our case, but I wouldn't trade the process for anything because I, I just think both of their performances are so strong and yeah, unexpected.

[00:14:52] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah, it's interesting that you, as a filmmaker, when you're casting this film, you're asking those types of questions as opposed to, Oh, "Dermot's, you know, Dermot's a big name. We got to attach it to this film" and not thinking it through as to what they're actually going to contribute, because I would imagine that you could get a big-name actor in there who's a great actor, but just for whatever reason, it's not the right fit. It's not the right look. And so, can you tell us more about the casting process, whether you used a casting agent, whether you just winged it on your own, because this is an indie film, right?

[00:15:30] **Carlson Young:** Yeah. Yeah, so when we, we did have a local casting agent in Austin, and we didn't have anybody in LA. We were really doing offers for the Tom and the Alice roles. I had worked with Vanessa a year or two ago on a very unrelated project. So, I was familiar with her work and I knew that given this material and my kind of instruction of this material, I thought, I think she can really do something, you know, interesting.

[00:16:00] And the same for Dermot, like I'm familiar with his work. And so far as the things that we all kind of know him from. And I'm like, "I want to see Dermot Moroni unhinged. Like that sounds great". So, I was just going off of feeling and instinct. Like I think these two people are Tom and Alice. I think they're going to really be able to bring something strange to, to both of these roles. And I'm always looking for strange. So, I was just blown away. Yeah.

[00:16:33] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah, Vanessa, I appreciated her performance because she added a little bit of an Alice in Wonderland type of vibe where her performance was. It was not unhinged like Dermot's, but she was pushing the limits of that reality. And you're kind of wondering if she's a part of the alternate universe too, are part of that dimension that you created.

[00:16:57] **Carlson Young:** She feels like a prisoner of that reality, which she is, you know, she's trapped in this trauma loop. But yeah. Yeah. I feel that too. She feels like oppressed.

[00:17:08] **Bryan Smith:** I like the way you explore trauma in this movie because I'm a trial lawyer by day and I represent survivors of sexual abuse and, so they're adults, but they were abused as children. And you nailed it when you described how trauma doesn't have a sense of time and this feeling that you have in this movie where you're sort of disoriented, and you don't really know always which world you're in. That is the feeling that is described by my clients, to me, in terms of like, when they smell the smell of the cologne that the perpetrator was wearing at the time that they were abused, you know, it just brings them back instantly. And they're no longer there, they're back where the abuse happened. And so your film really perfectly captured that disorienting feeling of, you know, where am I in time? Where am I in

space? And those dream-like qualities were very impressive by the way, in terms of indie budget and pulling off a big budget studio look. Can you tell us how you accomplish that, because this looks like a big budget film in terms of the sets? And, I know you had these limitations because of quarantine and pandemic and also budget, but how did you approach trying to create a studio, big budget look on a small budget?

[00:18:39] **Carlson Young:** Yes. I, a lot of confidence, first of all, I grossly underestimated the amount of just blood, sweat, and tears that the whole thing would take, which is I think the sign of any kind of anything worth pursuing, going to be a lot more than you think it's going to be. So, I bit off a lot, obviously, but I have always been really obsessed with the idea that if a filmmaker has an extremely strong vision and discernment, it's pretty extraordinary what you can pull off without not that much money. And you know, I've never worked on a big budget film before of my own, but for this, I was, I knew that if I could find the right locations, that we could do X, Y, and Z too then the production value would be X amount of dollars, and, you know, like it's, it's, it's sort of smoke and mirrors like light tricks. It's all about the bones of the location and how can we manipulate them. And so, when we found our hero house and the production value that that place inherently had. It was like a no-brainer. And then the other, you know, 30% of the locations, all of the blazing world, all the psychedelic stuff was a wedding resort directly across the street from that house directly across the street from that house. And it looked like you were in like, Italy or, or, I dunno, it was like Santa Barbara or something. It was completely just different. And this is all like outside of Austin, Texas. So, this is not like the architecture that you find in those parts, very like a- it was a real gem. And so, my production designer, you know, Rodney Becker and I just kind of walked through the spaces and more like "we can elevate this" and the same thing with Shane Kelly our DP. We know what we can do with this, this location being the raw material. And so I'm excited to have the time and not the pandemic restrictions and the budget one day, I feel like I'm really excited to, you know, take on the next one with everything that I've established and know to be true from this experience like, I know what you can do with not that much money. And that's like very shocking to people, but. I would sketch out what I wanted, the thing to look like, and Rodney the production designer would throw it in AutoCAD and, you know, we would just build it out.

[00:21:15] **Bryan Smith:** As you may have noticed, there are great resources and advice mentioned in all our episodes, and for many of them, we actually collect all of these resources for you in one easy place. Our newsletter, you can go to [dreampathpod.com/newsletter](http://dreampathpod.com/newsletter) to join. It's not fancy. Just an email about each week's episode, featured artists and resources to help you on your journey. Thanks. And now back to the interview.

[00:21:41] So as a director, the people that you're pulling into these projects, I mean, obviously your cinematographer he's got the goods. So, you're hiring these people, these experts, how much are you leaning on them to help you through just the logistics, the technical parts of pulling off a film like this, as opposed to using your own instincts and following your own vision?

[00:22:05] **Carlson Young:** Well, like any other film set, this set is a well-oiled machine. And every single department head is, you know, instrumental in getting the car to run. Like I can't go anywhere without the gas, which is my DP. And I can't, you know, I'm the steering wheel, but like the car around me is completely built out and only moving because everybody is performing their functions. So, I've got- I had, you know, a style guide and communicated as much as I possibly could with every single department head. But then I was more interested in what their interpretation of what I was kind of saying was and trusting their expertise. And, you know, Shane is. Shane's got an incredible resume. And so, do a lot of the other department heads, department heads, and me I'm the first-time filmmaker who has a lot of on-set experience just from coming up as an actor. So, I knew how the whole machine works. And so I knew like when to rely on. You know, Rudy, our gaffer to just like, wow, me with whatever. I sort of gave him as a rough outline of what the look is, you know? So there's always a lot of push and pull and I, I mean, the crew is amazing. I would, I would work with every single one of them again, it was just like, we had a really great communique.

[00:23:30] **Bryan Smith:** And how many days was this shoot?

[00:23:32] **Carlson Young:** 18 days.

[00:23:34] **Bryan Smith:** Amazing. That is amazing. Yeah. Well done. Yeah. So Isom. You are now straddling two worlds. You're in a band "Foster the People" you've got this. I mean, it's a huge, huge band, if this was not a pandemic, you would be touring and recording is not really hindered by the pandemic, but still if you're recording and you can't tour, I would imagine that that puts a kink into things.

[00:24:00] So, what are your thoughts now about the options for you in your career now that you know how to score a film, you pulled it off beautifully, but you also have this band that needs to keep going. They're not done yet. And they're great. So, your thoughts on that?

[00:24:18] **Isom Innis:** That's a really good question. I think it's, it's taking it a day at a time and seeing what comes, I mean, the great thing about the band is everyone that contributes to it for Mark the Sean, to everyone's a multi-instrumentalist and a producer and a songwriter, and they're creating all the time.

[00:24:40] And one of my favorite artists about. Being in this band is it's been really nurturing to everyone's career and, and everyone's musical development, and it's been great. It's been so exciting exploring this outlet. I feel so fortunate that my wife threw me this bone and gave me this challenge of trying to score this film because this isn't necessarily something, I ever saw myself doing. I think this- I've been producing albums for the last 10 years. I've been writing songs for a really long time. And I feel like there were certain skills, especially in production that kind of lend themselves towards being able to record and trying to prop up the film and move with the energy and the emotion of the film.

[00:25:34] But yeah, as far as how to balance both things unfortunate that they both are going full steam ahead. I mean, right now I'm not scoring anything else. So, we as a band.

[00:25:45] **Carlson Young:** Definitely on the hook for my next film, if I can have you.

[00:25:52] **Isom Innis:** But, yeah. I mean, we'll see, I mean, they're both full steam ahead. Yeah.

[00:25:59] **Bryan Smith:** Parallel paths.

[00:26:00] **Carlson Young:** Yeah. I mean, you're obviously, so. Humble about it, but I've been looking over his shoulder, watching what he does on a daily basis. He's like a wizard legitimately. He's a musical genius and, and there's not, there's no genre, like you are a multi genre. You can, you can do so much. And you know, he's like, and he went to Berkeley college of music, and he's just very educated in music production, but also just like being a multi-instrumentalist. So, like he can pretty much pick up any instrument and blow your mind. And so, I've always observed, I just always quietly observed him from afar, and I had no doubt in my mind that he could do this. And especially that the two of us together could do this. And, yeah, I mean, I definitely think that in a way that this is my directorial debut, like this is your composing debut. Like there, there's something really special with, you know, your instincts and, and, and your, your inspirations and the people that, you know, you're inspired by are super fresh, super cool. Yeah. I'm and you asked me several times, you're like, should I bring on somebody to like do this or this? Or should I add like someone to the team? And I'm like, no, that's true. I'm like, I'm like, you can do this.

[00:27:35] **Bryan Smith:** That's awesome. Yeah. So Isom. The people that I look to in terms of film, composers, that crossover from rock or pop music into film, Trent Reznor is one of them. And Richard Patrick from "Filter" is another, I interviewed Richard a couple of years ago. And the common denominator that I've noticed with those types of film composers is that they do have that core knowledge, that foundation that like you got at Berkeley, where you have all of the tools, you have all of the music theory, but you also have like production skills, you have engineering skills. You can do it all yourself. You're like the Jack of all trades when it comes to music. How did you get, and I know you went to Berkeley for your foundation for your music theory and execution, but how did you get the engineering skills? The recording skills to be able to put together a film score like this.

[00:28:39] **Isom Innis:** You know, it's interesting thinking about people that transition from being in a band to scoring films. I think there's something like when you've had the blessing of being able to play shows around the world and be in a position where you've done it for multiple times, there's something about playing in front of a crowd. Like once that you can spend all the time in the world, making an album, but then when you go and you play it for a room of people or a festival of people, you know, what's working and what's not working instantaneously.

[00:29:19] **Bryan Smith:** Right.

[00:29:20] **Isom Innis:** So once you have that experience, I feel like it ingrains in your psyche. And, and then from there, you're trying to write something that, you know, will work when you step on stage and play it. And that will. Give people feeling that will give people emotion, but it's really interesting with film; so, when you treat the, the, you're

treating the picture as the vocalist, you're serving the film, it's, it's driving all your decisions. It's driving the mood that you're trying to create. The story that you're trying to help tell.

[00:29:55] And I feel like those are really complimentary parts, but with engineering and production, I think a lot of it is just by default. I think that. Through the course of, of, and I've been really lucky to work with some other amazing engineers and amazing producers and amazing mixers throughout my career, that I've learned a lot from, from people like Paul Epworth to Rich Costy. People that when, you know, when I was in the room, I'd kind of be looking over the engineer's shoulder and just kind of seeing the way they're tweaking certain sounds. And I had the luxury of doing that and, and now just getting to kind of reframe it and, yeah, just, , hopefully yeah.

[00:30:40] **Carlson Young:** Put your own spin on it.

[00:30:43] **Isom Innis:** Yeah.

[00:30:44] **Bryan Smith:** Well, well done. I to succeed, yes, fully do that crossover. They're just a handful of people that have done it successfully. And you have so welcome to that world. And wow. And thanks for contributing so much to this film. I'm excited to see where it goes. So, let's talk Sundance.

[00:31:04] Sundance film festival is probably one of the most iconic film festivals in the world. Tell us about the process of going from having a short accepted into Sundance to having your first feature premiere there and the importance of that festival in terms of street cred, getting the word out and opportunities that opens for both of you.

[00:31:29] **Carlson Young:** Yeah. So, the short premiered in the midnight short section in 2018, and I went to the festival with the script in my hand, I mean, it's- the just sheer volume of submissions that Sundance gets is, you know, extraordinary. So, to get that nod and, you know, to be embraced by that festival is like bar none, the greatest blessings of my life to date. And this for- I feel forever in debt into Mike Plant and Ken Otani and people over there who, you know, like kind of cracked open the door and were like, "Yeah, come on in", like thank God for them, and yeah, I mean, it helped a lot having to short at Sundance, but the next two years was an uphill battle. You know, even having the festival cred. And I think that's a, that's a really important. You know, a bit of information for like anybody who's trying to kind of go on this path is term to remember.

[00:32:37] And I also think that part of that was like, this script is like very left of center. It's not, you know, it was, there was a lot to sell people on, and obviously it was ambitious just in terms of individual identity, and the, the blend of horror fantasy, like people kind of either people get that or they're like, "hmmm I don't get it", you know?

[00:32:58] So it wasn't the most straightforward script to develop into a feature. So I think that probably had something to do with it too. But, I mean, Sundance was invaluable and we, you know, we wrapped essentially September 1st of 2020. And the deadline for Sundance this year was like the first week of October.

[00:33:22] And so I had like truly no idea I'm going to make it. I think at one point I completely surrendered, which is like, wow, that's a lesson right there. But I was like, I, I said to Isom and I said to our producers and everyone, I was like, "guys, if we have a cut, that is like, viewable, then okay, we'll send it. I guess that couldn't hurt.

[00:33:45] But. I don't know if I'm to be able to like, get this done in three weeks, and sure enough, we did and Isom and I starting, what was, what did we start like the last week, the last couple of days of September Isom and I went into the studio and essentially didn't leave for a week and we just hammered out the entire score. And he had already, you know, ice and had a, uh, a library of ideas that he had been working on. He had like 20, 20-30 things. And so we just kind of went through like, and placed the things. And then we went through and just, you know, did this like orchestration of the entire, you know, score. And refine it from there, but yeah, I mean, it was like a pressure cooker of a timeline making that Sundance deadline, and we sent the rough cut to them and there's like, absolutely no VFX, rough score, no sound design, no color, nothing. And thank the Lord. You know, Ken Otani gives us a call and it's like this, "I think this is gonna be cool. Like we'd love to have you". Hallelujah.

[00:34:58] **Bryan Smith:** And those elements weren't there yet when they had seen it. My goodness. So, they actually have them, but they're probably great at seeing the potential in a film like that.

[00:35:08] **Carlson Young:** Yeah, they are, you know, I mean, most from what I'm told, most festivals are used to seeing rough cuts. So yeah, there's a certain level of grace, but kill. I mean, there was so much that was not there. Then everyone was just kind of like, "okay, well I trust you". And so yeah, I feel so grateful to have been embraced by them.

[00:35:31] **Bryan Smith:** So maybe it's too early to say because it just premiered recently at Sundance. But do you feel like in a way that this experience kind of resets your career because you were very well-known in television through "Scream" and "True Blood"? I don't think you were at risk of being pigeonholed or anything like that, but still you were well-known for a certain type of project, but now you have this feature film, and I would imagine that it's like, the last thing that you've done is probably the thing that people are going to pay attention to the most in terms of what your opportunities are. Have you started to see that happen for you yet? Or is it too early?

[00:36:13] **Carlson Young:** Yes, I have. I've started to see that happen. I mean, I, yes, I've done a lot of TV acting and, you know, gotten like a certain level of opportunity from that, but. I've always very much been at the mercy of like what other people will let me do, and so I'm, I've always felt like acting for me is like very like participatory, like I don't have a creative voice in something necessarily as an actor. Not every actor has that experience, but that's just, that's just been my experience.

[00:36:49] So with "The Blazing World", like this is who I am as, as a, you know, as a writer and director and doctor too. I don't think I've; I knew that I had more to give creatively and no one else was gonna do it for me. And so, yeah, I certainly hope that this is the pallet cleanser and this is the real, you know, this is my mission statement of, of who I am, and I

love the roles that I've played in the past and like doing scream and, you know, even something like recently, "Emily and Paris", which is like, so silly, that stuff is fun. And I, and I like to do it y'know I'm happy to do those things, but it's not who I am as an artist. So, I'm happy to. To kind of hit the refresh and, and, and, and by the way, it's taken me a long time to refine that identity and find my voice and find more than anything the confidence to tell the stories that I want to tell.

[00:37:54] **Bryan Smith:** I would imagine too, that it's nice to have this character, this persona, that. You can have a fan base from like "Scream". I mean, my kids are binge-watching "Scream" now. They were, they're sort of late to the party, but I told them who I was interviewing, they were like, "okay, they're on it" so I, and I watched it too. I was, I was binge watching it with them as well, and it's addictive. But to have that fan base, it sort of built in, I would imagine is a nice perk for going into the film world.

[00:38:28] **Carlson Young:** Yeah. It doesn't hurt. And I also feel like with "Scream" was such an amazing experience because we got to work with a lot of really amazing directors on every single episode, a lot of really cool up and coming, you know, or directors. And I was like a sponge, you know, just watching them and their process and just like the kind of mania machine that is TV, and learning. So, so, so much from there. And, and so yeah, having the, having the fan base and just kind of be something that is interesting, like how I feel like most of my acting jobs have been, they like just scratch the surface, but nothing has ever like completely broken through to the, to the mainstream.

[00:39:15] And so, I think that like puts me in a cool position of like, You know, maybe if you've caught like the shows, maybe like maybe, you know me, but like for the most part, I don't think people do. So, I am happy. I'm happy that like "The Blazing World" is potentially something that, you know, is like, if you're going to watch anything that I've done in my life, I hope it's "The Blazing World" you know?

[00:39:41] **Bryan Smith:** Well, it's obviously deeply personal. And the vulnerability of just the opening scene that opening scene is gut-wrenching, and I won't give it away, but there was a lot of emotion to this film that you're able to tap into as an audience. And I would imagine as a filmmaker, you feel seen and heard maybe for the first time, like you've never experienced before.

[00:40:06] I'd like to ask you both the same question. If you could tell me your perspective on the challenges of creating in a pandemic. I'm hearing a lot on social media from the creative community that they're really struggling to find motivation to create when there's so much happening. That is, that is kind of bigger and scarier and maybe more important seeming, than painting or writing a song or writing a short story or filming a movie. So what are your thoughts on that challenge that's happening right now in the creative community?

[00:40:46] **Isom Innis:** It's so true. It's so real, especially for music. It's a really, really hard time from venues that are having to close from people that all of a sudden can't do what they love to do. And I think when you, the pandemic's pulled the rug out from underneath the music, and I think we really realize how important concerts are and congregating together and listening to music in a bar, or just being connected to the people that are

listening. And I think that's a common thread with a lot of my friends who are in bands and writers and producers, it's really hard to be disconnected from your audience. And now a year has gone by, and that disconnection is just so strong and it's a really depressing place to be. And I think that. We're still months away from getting to a place where that can come back again.

[00:41:50] So, it's really, I think an endurance game right now, but with a film, I was so fortunate that I got to be on site while they were filming, because it was this 50-person community, all quarantining together. And I was able to feel that energy and kind of a condensed environment. That felt like playing a small show.

[00:42:15] It, because I think that connection, I mean, music is a language and it communicates more than words are capable of expressing. But I think getting to be for a very, very fortunate, not everyone will have this opportunity, but getting to be around that, that condensed group of people and, and feeding off their energy and having it motivate you to come up with something better.

[00:42:42] **Carlson Young:** You got to see, we got to see, like, we got to see and experience a little ecosystem of people in the collective world trauma that is going on right now, all participating and giving their gifts to, you know, this job that they were working on essentially. And we watched their passion be able to transcend the kind of. This stuff is so heavy, like what could I possibly do right now to make a difference? Like, like, you know, kind of what you said, like, it's, it's such a hard time for music right now. I know actors and virtually everyone unless you're on the front lines. I think everyone's kind of maybe asking like, how can I help? And it all feels so much bigger than you. And so like, you kind of get that disoriented, like sleep paralysis, feeling of like, paralyzed. My day-to-day suddenly seems so insignificant under the weight of this world. And I think that this is way easier said than done, but like my instinct is that that's why self-reflection and getting really serious about mental health and how to heal ourselves individually, as it pertains to the whole is so important right now because, well, if we all come out of this with just a fraction, more healing and clarity in our own individual spaces, then we will be a better community and a better country and a better world for it. So it's like, it's interesting because it's so personal yet your personal health contributes to the larger health.

[00:44:26] **Isom Innis:** I think also for the last thing I would say would just enduring from the music lens is. Trying to stay connected with your peers and your artistic community. Cause I've always felt like being around, even from going to school for music. One of my biggest motivators were just my peers that were better than me, that I was competing with, that I was sharing ideas with, and I think it's really important that during the pandemic, even though it's sometimes hard to turn on zoom and try to. Do a session or at first, it's kind of uncomfortable because it's easy to just isolate and, and not really want to reach out, but if you can stay connected with your artistic community, I feel like that that is such a giant motivator for me.

[00:45:17] And I feel like that's even with a band, like we've been doing that all year and we're still all battling. I mean, we, you know, we're still battling feeling. Depression from not being able to fully do what it is. No, we are put on the planet to do right.

[00:45:34] **Bryan Smith:** Well, I I've noticed that foster, the people has been able to put out meaningful, not just creating music during the pandemic, but putting out meaningful music.

[00:45:43] "It's Okay to be Human" in March in response to the pandemic and "The Things We Do" with donating profits to Black Lives Matter. I mean, you're finding a way to make an impact and you're creating, you're tapping into that creativity, but you're also not doing so in a trivial way.

[00:46:02] **Isom Innis:** Hmm. Wow. Thank you. That's I mean, I feel like we're just, we're just reacting in real time and yeah. I mean, thank you. That means a lot.

[00:46:13] **Bryan Smith:** Well, thank you for doing what you do. Both of you Carlson, one of your next projects is "12 Mighty Orphans" with Martin sheen, Bobby Deval, Luke Wilson, and Vanessa Shaw. Again. So, tell us about that.

[00:46:30] **Carlson Young:** I shot that last year and it is where I've met Vanessa. I think that's set to come out, maybe sometime this year, but it's a very different, you know, football film.

[00:46:41] **Bryan Smith:** When can we expect to see that hit streaming or theaters virtually?

[00:46:46] **Carlson Young:** I, I'm not totally sure what the distribution plan is. I know that Sony acquired it a few months back and thinking we're planning on doing some kind of theatrical release. So, I'm sure it will be a combination of that and streaming. So, I- I'm not sure that when that is coming, but yeah, definitely some good Martin Sheen stuff in there.

[00:47:08] **Bryan Smith:** Nice. Did you get to work with Duvall at all?

[00:47:12] **Carlson Young:** Um, no, he, he was, well, we were on set at the same time, but that's about it. He was there, he was there for one day, but, but yeah, like Martin Sheen for me was the takeaway and I mean, I'm, I'm in it for like 25 seconds. But he's, he's a real gem. He's a super cool dude.

[00:47:31] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. Every time I think of Martin Sheen, I think of "Apocalypse Now". And that scene that just gut-wrenching scene that really established his acting career. I mean, what a juggernaut of an actor, to be able to work alongside him must have been a privilege.

[00:47:49] **Isom Innis:** I'll never forget. It was a couple years ago on your birthday. She was filming and I, and I came to, to Texas where they're shooting, and I showed up and I just remember there was a birthday cake and I walked in to the catering tent and Martin Sheen was wearing like a full Pilgrim outfit.

[00:48:10] **Carlson Young:** Wasn't he wearing a Turkey outfit?

[00:48:20]

[00:48:20] **Isom Innis:** It was half pilgrim half turkey.

[00:48:25] **Carlson Young:** Yeah.

[00:48:26] **Bryan Smith:** Just for fun or part of the movie?

[00:48:32] **Isom Innis:** It's in an orphanage and it was a Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Day shoot.

[00:48:39] **Bryan Smith:** So, any future projects you want to talk about before we sign off?

[00:48:44] **Carlson Young:** Yeah. I, I'm about, well, I will just say I'm finished with the script that I'd like to do next called Femina Knox, it's about a 12 year old girl falls out of the tree and sort of prematurely is thrust into, puberty and she gets stalked by six teens of the patriarchy that wants to influence her feminine identity. It's just the light Sunday afternoon.

[00:49:17] **Bryan Smith:** Oh, you like ambitious projects. That's great.

[00:49:21] **Carlson Young:** But it's going to be really cool, like it's kind of got the tone and the upbeat, like snap of "Eighth Grade, because it's like middle school, but it's like middle school and like 2001, you know? So it's very like Y2K Brittany Spears playing in the background, but with these like surreal horror elements baked in too, so I'm really excited to see 12-year-olds and,

[00:49:50] **Isom Innis:** And Udo Kier

[00:49:51] **Bryan Smith:** Oh, he's great.

[00:49:52] **Carlson Young:** Yeah, definitely. He's gonna, if I should be so lucky, but. Yeah, he's definitely got a role in Femina Knox.

[00:50:00] **Bryan Smith:** And I guess we know what movie Isom is working on next then, which is less now, right on. Well, it's been such a pleasure having both of you on the podcast. Carlson.

[00:50:12] **Carlson Young:** Thank you, Bryan. This is so fun.

[00:50:15] **Isom Innis:** Yeah, Bryan thank you.

[00:50:17] **Bryan Smith:** Hey, thank you for listening. And I hope you enjoy today's episode. If so I have a favor to ask. Can you go to wherever you listen to podcasts and leave me a review? Your feedback is what keeps this podcast going. You can also check us out on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook with the handle @dreampathpod, and as always go find your dream path.