

OUR TOWN

JUST FOR VARIETY

by Marc Malkin



Melissa Barrera (1) admits she had some major issues to overcome while shooting her Netflix series, “Keep Breathing.” The “In the Heights” star plays an attorney who is the only survivor after her small plane crashes into a lake in the frigid wilderness. “Diving into that water was probably one of the scariest things,” Barrera tells me on this week’s “Just for Variety” podcast. “I have this real fear of drowning. So doing all of that was very therapeutic for me.”

Like her character, Barrera is a city gal at heart: “I’m a person that enjoys having indoor plumbing and a shower and a toilet. And I don’t like being dirty and I don’t like having to pee in the woods ... but I became a lot more outdoorsy because of the show.”

I talked with Barrera on Zoom from the set of “Scream 6.” She reprises her role as Sam Carpenter after making her debut in the super-successful franchise reboot earlier this year. “I can’t tell you anything,” Barrera says. “All I can tell you is that we’re having the time of our lives.”

As we all know by now, **Neve Campbell (2)** announced she wasn’t returning for the sixth “Scream” because she didn’t feel the salary offer reflected her true worth. “It was shocking, but also, as a woman, I get it,” Barrera says. “Especially as a woman of color, I deal with that stuff all the time where I feel like they’re not paying me what I know that I’m worth. But usually for me, I feel like it’s because I’m a Latina, and they don’t value us as much as white women. So if Neve being a white woman is feeling undervalued, that just goes to show how much of a problem it is in the industry. I applaud her sticking to what she believes in.”

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Salma Hayek (3) knows about iconic women. Not only did her work as Frida Kahlo in 2002’s “Frida” earn her an Oscar nom, but now she’s a producer of Hulu’s “Santa Evita,” about the disappearance of Eva Perón’s corpse following her death in 1952 at age 33. “It really is a thriller,” Hayek tells me. “Instead of who killed the person, it’s like, where is the body of the person? Who stole it? Who has it? Why did they steal it? I find it very original. It also gives us a fantastic excuse to show Evita [played by **Natalia Oreiro**] full of life and tell some anecdotes that are not some of the most known.”

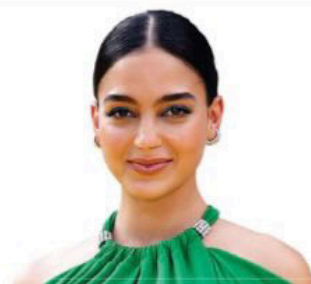
Hayek recently wrapped “Without Blood,” an indie drama written and directed by **Angelina Jolie (4)**, based on Italian writer **Alessandro Baricco**’s bestselling novel and co-starring **Demian Bichir**.

“Angelina is the best director I’ve ever worked with,” Hayek gushes. “She’s extraordinary. I think this might be her best movie. She had such a clear vision and yet gave herself the freedom to experiment and gave us the freedom to play with her. It was just nirvana. She has no ego.”

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Get to know **Dane DiLiegro (5)**! The 6’9” former pro basketball player portrays the Predator in Hulu’s “Prey.” “It was a suit, and the head comes off and on,” DiLiegro tells me of his alien costume. “You have to drink enough water so you don’t pass out because it’s so hot, but not too much that you have to go to the bathroom all the time. I know my dietary restrictions. I had to time it all because if I’m shooting a 12-hour day, I have to be cognizant of what’s going in and what’s going out.”

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