



INTERVIEW

## Interview: Brant Daugherty Talks Holiday Family Time, '#XMAS' and 'Pretty Little Liars'

by [CHELSEA BRIMSTIN](#)

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It's almost time to deck the halls, and what screams "fa la la la" more than a [Hallmark Channel Christmas movie on W Network?](#) To get us in the holiday spirit, we got a chance to sit with Brant Daugherty and chat about [#XMAS](#), the new festive flick that he stars in alongside *Nashville* star Clare Bowen.

While you may know him as the brooding Noel Kahn from *Pretty Little Liars*, Brant Daugherty is actually just a holiday lover at heart who's looking forward to spending time with his toddler son.

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“The holidays have been changing for me the last few years,” Daugherty told us. “My wife and I had our first child last year, so this is his second Christmas and it's really just evolved. I mean, it's always been about family for us, so we still go and see family and everything. But we have a whole brand-new focus now that we have a baby and it's all about seeing it through his eyes and showing him all these things for the first time and setting up traditions together that we're still trying to figure out. We're brand new with this.”

As a family man, Daugherty really treasured getting to star in such a fun-loving and festive film that he can share with his loved ones.

“#XMAS is such a fun movie,” he added. “I think you can expect some laughs. I hope you can expect some tears. We set out to make a movie that was very fully realized and emotionally heartfelt, but funny at the same time. We really wanted to add a level of comedy to it, and I hope that comes across. I hope it's a very lovely way to spend two hours with your family the day after [American] Thanksgiving.”

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Hallmark movie.”  
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**Brant Daugherty loved stepping into a (very) different role than his *Pretty Little Liars* character**

Daugherty opened up about his relationship to *Pretty Little Liars* and explained that he's still so grateful for all of the longstanding support from his fans. “Thank you to every one of you,” he said earnestly.

“First of all, on that note, I would love to see Noel Kahn in a Hallmark movie,” Daugherty teased through a chuckle. “I think that would be a delight. Personally, I don't know if it would fly over there. I don't know how popular it would be, but I would be really interested in it. And yeah, *Pretty Little Liars* was a really fun way of just taking your filter off... At least playing Noel was just kind of saying whatever came to his mind and being an unfiltered version of yourself.”

While that was a lot of fun at the time, and he got to explore some extreme forms of high-stakes acting, Daugherty is excited to have a movie like #XMAS that he can share with his kid.

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“As fun as [playing Noel Kahn] is, it’s not exactly what I’m trying to show my son at this point in his life. So these movies, it’s like you said, it’s about tapping into a different mindset. It’s a lot more easygoing and a lot of fun. You don’t take things as seriously. Things aren’t the highest stakes they can be, and it allows you to play around in more of these kind of interpersonal relationships without there being life-or-death stakes.”

Now, with this heartwarming new film, he has something that he can give not only to his fans, but to his loved ones.

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“Let your characters breathe a little bit, you know what I mean?” he says of *Pretty Little Liars* with a smile. “And then you end up with something that’s, you know, if my 19-month-old son and my 90-year-old grandmother are in the same room watching it, we’re all going to have a good time. That’s a big deal around the holidays.”

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**“I always try to give my characters a way of learning or relating to the world.”**

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### **What can we expect from Brant Daugherty’s role in #XMAS?**

Playing Max was obviously a much different (and less terrifying) role than that of Noel Kahn in *Pretty Little Liars*, but his favourite part about Max was the character’s “sheer optimism.”

“The thing I think I loved about Max the most is his sheer optimism, which is something that was really fun to tap into. I’m not naturally like that all the time. As an actor, I think you’re always kind of like, ‘Oh, what’s going to happen next? Who knows,’ but Max is so steadfast.”

While acting is its own unique form of visual literacy, Daugherty was excited to explore that in a new way by playing a character who was passionate about photography.

“There’s something about photography, and I think it’s really about trying to find the most beautiful way of looking at something. I think that’s Max in a nutshell. He carries his camera around. He’s always trying to find the most beautiful angle – the perfect way of looking at something or approaching a situation or relating to Jen in a way that can help her. There’s just something really nice about that. Something feels safe about it.”

“I always try to give my characters a way of learning or relating to the world,” he adds. “Sometimes some characters are more tactile and Max was very visual, so I really wanted to lean into that a lot.”

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## What was filming a Hallmark Christmas movie like?

For Daugherty, filming a Hallmark Channel Christmas movie was a unique experience that allowed him to channel a sense of playfulness. In fact, on set, *#XMAS* director Heather Hawthorn Doyle wanted the actors to uncover their own comedic moments in the film. Many of the scenes were filmed spontaneously in multiple different ways, so Daugherty and his castmates don't actually know what versions have made the final cut.

“Our lovely director, Heather, encouraged us to find the comedy in different scenes here and there. To be honest with you, I’m not sure how the movie plays because we took a few different takes on different scenes here and there, so I’m not sure what we ended up with yet,” he revealed. “I’m excited to see it, as I hope everyone else is, but that said, working with Clare Bowen was an absolute treat. She made her character, Jen, so funny in such a relatable way, and really found some amazing moments. So I think just working with her and finding how she interpreted this character and took her on this journey, it was a lot of fun.”

Ultimately, that’s what Daugherty is looking forward to most – seeing how the end result plays out.

“We took a few very different stabs at scenes based on how we were feeling in the moment or how we felt our characters were feeling, and kudos to Heather and Clare for letting us play around like that. I’m honestly really excited to see it. We did some scenes that were a little more emotional, some scenes that were a little funnier. I have no idea how it plays out yet, so I’m excited.”

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**“That’s what I’m looking forward to, really, is just developing some new traditions with my family and just seeing it through my son’s eyes.”**

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## **Brant Daugherty can’t wait for Christmas Con, the premiere of #XMAS and spending time with his son**

When we asked Daugherty about what he was most looking forward to over the holidays, he had too many things to name them all, but he’s most looking forward to spending time with his son.

“I’ll be attending my first Christmas Con this year, which I’m very excited about,” he teased. “I’m really excited to meet everyone there in New Jersey this December. But beyond that and beyond the premiere of this movie, obviously this is my son’s second Christmas, like I said. Last year he was really into it, but he didn’t really get it. But this year, he’s talking about Santa Claus and elves and we’re showing him reindeer and he’s singing Christmas songs already. It’s like it has taken on a whole new world and, as you can see, we’re already ready. We have our Christmas tree up. We don’t want to rob this kid of a single second of the holiday season, so we went hard this year.”

“That’s what I’m looking forward to, really, is just developing some new traditions with my family and just seeing it through my son’s eyes.”

#Xmas premieres **Friday, December 16 at 8 p.m. ET/PT** on [W Network](#). Viewers can also stream all 2022 premieres live and on demand on [STACKTV](#) with Amazon Prime Video Channels, fuboTV, Rogers Ignite TV and Ignite SmartStream.

#Xmas stars Clare Bowen (*Nashville*), Brant Daugherty (*Pretty Little Liars*).

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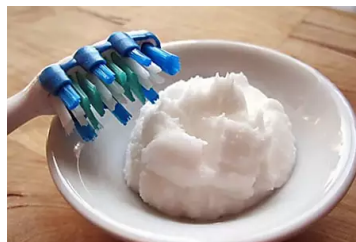
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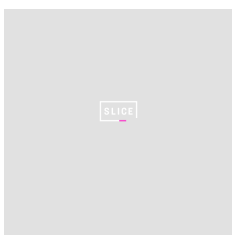


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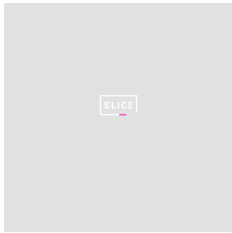
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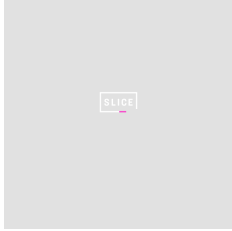




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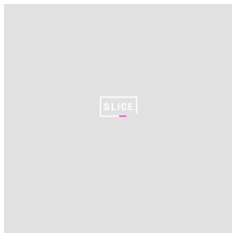
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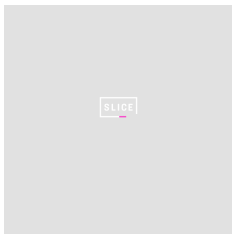
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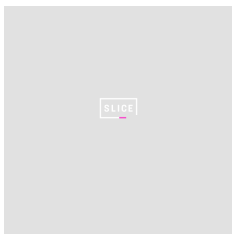
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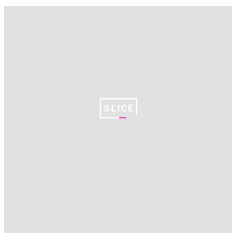
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