



# Our Hen House

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## Interview with Emily Deschanel

By OUR HEN HOUSE

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*Following is a transcript of an interview with **EMILY DESCHANEL** conducted by **JASMIN SINGER** and **MARIANN SULLIVAN** of [Our Hen House](#), for the [Our Hen House podcast](#). The interview was conducted by telephone on August 13, 2013.*

JASMIN: Emily Deschanel stars on Fox's hit show *Bones*, a drama noted for its light comedic undertone, which will soon be filming its ninth, yes, *ninth*, season. The darkly amusing series features Emily as Dr. Temperance Brennan, a brilliant but emotionally stunted forensic anthropologist who writes novels as a sideline and has an uncanny ability to read clues left behind in a victim's bones. Emily's performance has garnered her three Teen Choice Award nominations for Choice TV Actress-Drama, and two People's Choice Award nominations for Favorite TV Drama Actress, as well as a nomination for Favorite TV Crime Fighter. Emily was recently seen in Anne Renton's independent comedy *The Perfect Family*, where she played a successful lawyer who struggles with telling her religious mother she is pregnant and in a loving, committed relationship with another woman. She also starred in Nick Cassavetes' *My Sister's Keeper* and can be seen in Jerry Bruckheimer's *Glory Road*.

A passionate animal rights activist and long-time vegan, Emily has worked with Farm Sanctuary, the Humane Society, and Mercy for Animals. She has also been involved with Women for Women International and Five Acres.

Welcome to Our Hen House, Emily!

EMILY: Thank you so much! I'm very glad to be here.

JASMIN: We're so excited to talk to you. We have been fans of yours for so long, both of your acting and of your advocacy; and we're excited to talk to you a bit about both, including if and when the two overlap. So, to start, you, like my partner Mariann here, have been vegan for twenty years now. Is that right?

EMILY: That's right, that's right. I just--I'm planning a dinner to celebrate. Yeah, I've been vegan for twenty years and a bit now, so it's exciting. I can't believe it's been that long. And it's--the difference is so--is huge from the time I began and now. I mean, what was available

and the restaurants and food and what people knew about veganism, if anything, and now... it's unbelievable.

MARIANN: It really has changed tremendously. I wish I knew the exact date I went vegan. It was so fuzzy there for a while drifting in between, but I don't. I would have a party too.

JASMIN: Let's have one. I'll throw you a party, honey.

EMILY: But you know basically, right, how much time it's been?

JASMIN: Yeah, exactly. Champagne is definitely called for here, vegan champagne of course.

EMILY: Yeah!

JASMIN: Tell us a little bit about when you went vegan and why.

EMILY: I first--I'd watched the documentary *Diet for a New America*, which most people, or at least--I don't know, people have heard of the book or read the book. And then I read the book. But there was a documentary by the same title, and it kind of opened my eyes to the cruelty in factory farms and how the food got to my plate, and I didn't want to have any part of it. So I went vegetarian right away, and then it took me two years before I became vegan. Was it two? Yeah, I think it was two years. It took me a while, 'cause it was a transition to become vegetarian.

And then I decided to become vegan when I did a summer program at Bennington College. That's how I remember when exactly 'cause it's Bennington's July Program, which is a program for high school students, so I did it before my senior year of high school. And then they had vegan options at every meal, so I didn't have to require my parents to make me food or me have to try and do it while I'm also trying to be--I did plays in high school, and I also had homework to do, so it was harder for me to cook for myself. And I didn't know what to do. So having that one month of meals that there was always a vegan option, they had soymilk on tap, they had like tempeh and things like that in the commissary. So, it was easy for me to go vegan that way, and then I just stuck with it. I mean, I had a couple mishaps a bit.

MARIANN: Of course.

EMILY: But that's basically when I became vegan.

MARIANN: That's such a great story and I love that it had to do with Bennington, great old Bennington College. What a great place that is.

EMILY: You gotta love Bennington.

MARIANN: And it shows you how much the necessity of both the impetus and the availability. You were probably in one of the few places in America that actually had vegan

food available, and it helped you so much. And now so many more people have it available to them.

EMILY: Exactly, exactly. I mean, it was this tiny, tiny little college that was just on it, way back when, and it was so cool. And I lived in Los Angeles growing up, and now you think of Los Angeles as being a place that has a lot of vegan options but-- And Real Food Daily had opened there or just--I think about--I went there once or something. But yeah, I don't know, I'm trying to think when it opened. But I went there, I think after I became vegan. But basically, it opened around the same time.

But there weren't any other vegan options as far as I knew. The Internet wasn't really there, you didn't have that connection. You didn't have all the vegan cookbooks and all the vegan resources and nutritional support and books on why it's better for us nutritionally to go vegan, all that information that's come out since. And all the doctors that are for it, like Dr. Fuhrman, et cetera. And it's just so amazing what it--and not to mention the shoes-

MARIANN: Right! The shoes!

EMILY: ...and belts like that. I mean, trying to find non-leather shoes was challenging.

MARIANN: Shoes were definitely tough and they were pretty uncomfortable. And still, even though things have gotten so much better and people do have the options available to them, and things are changing exponentially, we see a lot of people who kind of try it on for size and then say that they don't feel well or they're hungry all the time or they have issues. What would be your advice to those folks?

EMILY: Well, just the standard American diet or what--if you just say you're an omnivore, that can mean so many different things. There's lots of different options to eating a vegan diet. It can be a big range. You could be eating French fries all day long and chocolate cake, and you're vegan, and that's not healthy. That wouldn't be healthy if you're vegan or not vegan. It's just not healthy. And certain people need certain things differently than other people. But I say, work with a nutritionist who is also sympathetic to being vegan, 'cause sometimes they're old school and they don't know enough about veganism. There's just a lot of information out there, but I say, also use--do it slowly, you can do it slowly over time. But you have to also remind yourself of why you're doing it, I think if you do it for the animals, you're more likely to stick to it for a longer period of time. Sometimes different people do it for their health too and have had health issues and they've really improved, and that really makes them stick. But you have to kind of figure out what you might not be doing that's so healthy in your diet and kind of rework that. There was--Bonsai Aphrodite, do you know that blog?

JASMIN: Yes, absolutely.

EMILY: Yeah, I loved her piece on when she questioned becoming vegan. She had health issues for a long time, and she had a long road, but she was determined to continue to be

vegan and she did. And it was challenging and she questioned things, but she learned how to--she figured out how to do it and stay vegan. She even has chickens, and people were kind of encouraging her to eat their eggs, and she said, "But if I do, that means you can't do it, without being non-vegan." She wanted to stay vegan and she did it. So, I just think of that as a great example of somebody--if they think they have issues or they feel like they're craving meat for some reason--I crave chocolate all the time, does that mean that I should eat it? No.

JASMIN: Well, if it's fair trade and slavery-free, then you should eat it.

MARIANN: Why not?

EMILY: Yeah. I mean, yes, you should eat it, but not for every meal, is what I'm saying.

JASMIN: Well, it depends, maybe. You have had...

EMILY: Yeah, but fair trade, of course.

JASMIN: Right. Exactly. Actually, you and I--I was just telling you this--we have a friend in common, Ari Solomon, who is a reviewer on our podcast. And I have this memory of being with him at a Whole Foods standing in the chocolate aisle and we were "those vegans." We were standing there looking at all of the chocolate and reading the label and googling whether that was fair trade *and* slavery-free or just fair trade, and of course obviously it had to be vegan. And we were just like a caricature of ourselves, so it's funny you should bring up the chocolate.

EMILY: You have to know the different brands that are great, and their dark chocolate is vegan, like Alter Eco and Endangered Species and those ones. There's a few.

JASMIN: It's true.

EMILY: You want the fair trade. I'm into the Alter Eco lately, with the quinoa.

JASMIN: Okay, I'm gonna have to try that.

EMILY: With the quinoa.

JASMIN: The quinoa chocolate!

EMILY: A little crunch.

JASMIN: Yeah I've heard about that. You've had a number of episodes on *Bones* that have had really strong messages about animals, like one about factory farming, which we actually reviewed for our podcast--

EMILY: Aw, that's awesome!

JASMIN: Yeah, well we loved it, and one about the exotic pet trade. Now, I'm assuming that you were the driving force behind these episodes. Were your colleagues receptive to having *Bones* delve into animal issues?

EMILY: Yeah! Okay, to answer your question, yes and no. I requested that they try to do an animal episode every season. Now, we haven't achieved that every season, but --yes, it depends. I mean, Dean Lopata is one of our writers, and he actually wrote the one about the chickens, the chicken factory farms, and he also wrote the one about exotic animal trade, so he really has gotten into the animal issues, which is amazing.

And I actually--I talked to him one day on set. We were talking about how sugar can be processed with cattle bones, and so sugar's not always vegan. And he's like, "what?" And I said yeah, and I said, "Even water can be processed with cattle bones. But then you have a question, do you drink the tap water that's better? You have a whole dilemma." And he said, "What? I didn't know that, oh, you just gave me a clue for something." I don't know what he was gonna do with it or if it ever came to fruition or will of this coming season. But he's really been open to all the animal issues, so he's been the man behind those episodes.

And I've been--we just started the season, and so we haven't had a--I have a meeting with the producers and stuff as we start the season. We haven't had that yet, so that's one thing I like to bring up. But I really, I kind of started something, but I haven't written the episodes. And the ideas I had, I had an idea for the exotic animal trade before they did it, a few years, and that totally got scrapped and it was like a whole new thing. And then I had an idea about--I watched some horrible show about--I will sometimes watch the reality forensics shows, which is very disturbing, but I will watch them. And there was one where a woman was identified because she was buried with her dog.

MARIANN: Wow.

JASMIN: That's so sad.

EMILY: And her dog had a particular contraption because her dog was paralyzed, and so he had one of those rolling kind of wheelchair for a dog for his two legs.

MARIANN: Wow.

EMILY: Anyway, so she was identified with that, and I said, "Then you could bring up dogs, you could bring up puppy mills, you could bring up all kinds of things with that." But anyway, so I bring ideas to them, but usually it turns into something completely different by the time it's an episode, so Dean Lopata's been very responsible for that. But my boss is receptive on some level, but he also completely makes fun of me for being vegan all the time.

JASMIN: Yeah. I mean, you do such amazing work though, just getting it out there to the vast mainstream. Is there ever any kind of backlash, either through the public or through within the industry to "going there"?

EMILY: You know, we haven't faced that, and we've somehow been able to get away with things. We have, obviously we have sponsors or whatever you want to call--I don't think you'd call--oh, advertisers that sell meat. There's different restaurants that advertise on our show, and we've somehow did it in a way that no one as far as I know has actually complained about things like that. But of course people will say crap about things, you know, about me being vegan or vegetarian. But I don't really--somebody mentioned that there was controversy about me being vegan while I was pregnant, but I was completely unaware 'cause I was just unplugged to anything.

MARIANN: Well, that was good. Good thinking!

EMILY: It's not very--it's not always helpful to read the negative stuff.

MARIANN: Yeah, absolutely. I'm really excited about this season. We are serious *Bones* fans, we are not making that up.

EMILY: Aw, you're so sweet!

MARIANN: When we sit down to watch television, the first thing we say to each other, "Is there a new *Bones*?" And then if there isn't, we find something else to watch. I'm totally serious. But now this season, I'm totally excited about this season because of the pending wedding, which I hope is going to occur.

EMILY: Yes!

MARIANN: But now I'm even more excited because you're gonna be discussing bone char in processing in sugar.

EMILY: Yes, hopefully.

MARIANN: That is so much bigger.

EMILY: Exactly.

JASMIN: That could be like the name of the next season, it can be called "Bones Char."

EMILY: We have the wedding coming up, Pelant the serial killer is back, the episode we start tomorrow, so that's a big thing. We go undercover as these characters that we did the second season that were these kind of Italian people, named Tony and Roxy. So we go undercover at a couples' retreat at kind of a new-agey kind of place with a shaman. We do a sweat lodge, which I have personal experience with in my real life from when I was young. But--so yeah, so we--that's fun, we go undercover very conspicuously, as always on *Bones*. When we go undercover, it's always the most conspicuous way to go undercover.

MARIANN: I can't wait.

EMILY: We're not trying to blend in at all. So that's fun, we have a lot of fun episodes coming up. And there might even be a honeymoon after the wedding. I heard a rumor of that, so that would be fun too.

MARIANN: This is exciting. We got married last year.

EMILY: Oh, congratulations!

MARIANN: So we'll relive it.

EMILY: Did you get a honeymoon?

JASMIN: We went to Chinatown that day. We had some very good vegan lunch.

EMILY: I had a two-day honeymoon that was just a surprise to me, so I hear you on that.

MARIANN: Oh, you're ahead of us.

EMILY: Yeah.

JASMIN: Oh, that's exciting.

EMILY: Two days. My parents never had a honeymoon and they've been married for like 40 years or something at this point. Yeah, 40 years.

JASMIN: We should--we'll go on a honeymoon with your parents. That's how we'll--

EMILY: Yeah!

JASMIN: We'll arrange that, it'll be fine. So I heard that you just did a PSA for Mercy for Animals that is coming out soon. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

EMILY: Yeah. It's basically opening people's eyes to what's going on in factory farms and the cruelty, and encouraging people to get involved by changing the way they eat and also supporting organizations like Mercy for Animals, so shedding the light on the abuses.

So, I did the voice-over for something that was specific for Mercy for Animals a couple years ago that was for--or a year ago I guess--for auctions specifically. And I've done, this year I did something for PETA that was about dairy, specifically. So this one's a little more inclusive of a lot of different things that happen and kind of just--it shows people some images and things that are happening in factory farms, and kind of opens people's eyes to what's happening, the cruelty that happens to these animals before they land on people's plates. And it's just also talking about the great work that Mercy for Animals does, which I *love*. I love Nathan, who runs it. He started it when he was a teenager. It's just so inspiring. And now Ari works there, so that's very exciting.

JASMIN: Yeah, we love Mercy for Animals and Nathan and Ari, and it's great that you did that. Ari said it was fantastic. I can't wait to see it. Now I have to say, you just like radiate health and beauty.

EMILY: Oh, you're very kind.

JASMIN: I mean, I'm not gonna get into the crush I have on you 'cause that would be inappropriate for this interview. But I know that our listeners are probably curious and so are we. Could you walk us through a typical day of what your life looks like in terms of food?

EMILY: Yeah, food, okay. I--Right now I have food delivered, but it's generally, for breakfast it will be veggies, kind of like a hash, and sometimes I have hot sauce 'cause I like a little spice sometimes. Sometimes I'll make a shake for myself in the morning if I want a little extra boost, like with some protein powder. And I'll use Vega protein powder or I'll use Sun Warrior or use this other pea protein powder, and I mix them up. And then I'll even do some berries and coconut water, and put in some greens and things like that. And I like this NutraVege supplement. That's just an oil--it's like an oil, it's Omega-3.

JASMIN: Okay.

EMILY: So it's like fish oil for vegans.

JASMIN: Right, fishless oil, from algae, right?

EMILY: Fish approved. Algae. Thank you!

JASMIN: Got it.

EMILY: I was like, "plankton?"

JASMIN: Plankton!

EMILY: Algae, thank you, it's from algae. So I like that, NutraVege. But I have a salad for lunch every day with some kind of protein, which is usually beans or nuts or seeds added to it, with a dressing. And I, I have snacks. But I like to have a little treat, so I'll have a little tiny cookie or some fruit, so I'll have something sweet. I have a sweet tooth, so... For dinner, veggies with like a tomato sauce and some Daiya cheese, or it could be a big heap of greens with different sauces and things. Like I said, I don't have time to cook for myself right now, so I'm not cooking. But I love, like, sesame sauce that I can--that's very simple to make with just lemon juice and sesame seeds. That's what I'd make sometimes on my own. I'd make some kale or spinach and mix that in with it.

JASMIN: Where were we before kale, you know?

EMILY: I know.

JASMIN: Like, why did we not grow up on kale? It just sort of appeared lately, or at least to us.

EMILY: I know, and now it's everywhere. You can't get away from it, so it's hard to avoid now. But yeah. So I try to make sure I get my greens in with a raw salad and cooked greens when I can, as much as possible, and try to drink green juices every day or every other day. I'll put some green powder in water, or lemon water, to kind of alkalize things.

MARIANN: I can see why you look so healthy because your diet sounds incredibly healthy. And it's interesting, isn't it, how vegan food has kind of shifted away from a lot of the soy products? I mean, you've been vegan a long time and drifted more towards the vegetables. Vegetables are kind of at the center of everybody's plate.

EMILY: Yeah. Now the new buzz word is "plant-based food."

MARIANN: Right.

EMILY: You don't hear "vegan" as much as "plant-based food," "plant-based diet," which I like. I mean, it should be plant-based and you should be as close to the source of the food as possible. So yeah, I don't eat a lot of the fake meat. I think that's a good transition food for people who are still--are moving from, becoming, moving into veganism or vegetarianism. But I don't know how healthy it is to continue eating it. I can't have soy anymore, so that limits a lot of things. But if you have--

MARIANN: Yeah, I think that a lot of people find that they move toward vegetables. But whatever people want to eat is fine as long as they don't eat animals.

EMILY: There you go.

MARIANN: So do you feel like the Hollywood scene is becoming more vegan-friendly?

EMILY: Yeah, definitely. I mean, more and more people are becoming vegan, and people are more aware. I don't know, I think just in general in the world. I'm not really in the Hollywood scene, so I don't know. But I just know in the world, it's become more vegan-friendly. Before when I'd have to explain what it is, but now people know exactly what it is and are very sensitive to that. So it's nice. I'm really glad that we're living in the times we are, and I can imagine it's only gonna get better and better. But when people like Bill Clinton are vegan, I think that also makes it, I don't know.

JASMIN: It normalizes it a little bit, right?

EMILY: More okay for some people. Yeah, normalizes it, yeah. "Oh, it must make sense, he's doing it."

JASMIN: Right. Bill Clinton is doing it. No, it's true, it's everywhere. And you have a brand new baby, congratulations.

EMILY: Thank you.

JASMIN: So I would imagine that that would be a very hopeful thing for you as a new mom to be raising a kid in a world that seems to be bending toward compassion a little more each day, and bending toward more consciousness and certainly more vegan food.

EMILY: Yeah, it's wonderful, it's wonderful. I mean, one thing my husband worried about raising a vegan/vegetarian child is him feeling different. But then talking to other parents of kids who are vegan or vegetarian, it's much more normal these days. I remember as a child--this is horrible--but I remember as a child, my sister had a girl at her birthday party once, and we had hot dogs at her birthday party. And the little girl said, "I'm a vegetarian, I can't eat this." And I remember rolling my eyes and thinking, "Ugh, this is so annoying!"

JASMIN: That's good; it's good to remember things like that. We all have stories like that where we thought it was radical or scary or weird or gross, and it helps you remember--

EMILY: It's just annoying. It was weird and annoying to me as a child. Like, it didn't affect me at all. I wasn't even making the hot dogs. I didn't have to make her some other food. But it was like, just like "you're weird" or something. "You're other than, and that's not okay with me." But I just--I always laugh thinking about that because now having a kid who doesn't eat meat. He may experience people thinking that about him.

JASMIN: Surround him with a lot of really weird kids, and then he won't be weird at all. That's my parenting advice to you.

EMILY: Exactly. I like it.

JASMIN: Yeah, see?

EMILY: The weird kids are the more interesting ones anyway.

JASMIN: Exactly, they grow up to change the world so... Emily, I can't thank you enough for joining us. You are doing so much to change the world for animals.

EMILY: Aw.

JASMIN: And like I said, we're big fans of all that you do for the world and all that you do for our entertainment hour at night. And I just, really, I'm so grateful that there are ambassadors like you out there fighting the good fight and speaking the truth, because people listen to you.

EMILY: Aw, go on.

JASMIN: And I appreciate your sharing your story with us on Our Hen House today, such a treat for us.

EMILY: Aw, thank you! Thank you ladies so much for all that you do for animals. You do incredible work, and I really appreciate it. It's a lot more than what I do, so I'm very happy to be on your show and talk to you.

JASMIN: Yeah, well, thanks Emily. Talk to you soon, maybe next time over a quinoa chocolate, fair trade, slavery-free treat. Sounds good.

EMILY: Ooh. Yeah, let's do it.

JASMIN: Let's do it. Take care, thank you.

EMILY: Okay, bye!

JASMIN: Bye. That was the one and only Emily Deschanel.