Charlie Sandlan ([00:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6camzT_vvlsrysuRFq3jRGoJEh7q6Btf5v9X2SL1PugzU0NiCUoX8E9uHCwz-dmJRfHbwwL0Bgq-U363qQIR4PibDNo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3.18)):

It's not easy to roll the dice on yourself. To place a bet that says, you know what? I think I have something of value to contribute into the world. I have a voice that needs to be heard. I have something to say. And honestly, I think I should be paid to say it. That's going to require you to make some big decisions, my friends. To really jump off the cliff. You might have to pack up your bags, move across the country, move to a different country, put yourself deeply in debt in order to learn how to do what it is you want to do. Shitty survival jobs, years of just backbreaking, heartbreak, rejection.

Charlie Sandlan ([00:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HLmP6WzsZA1d3UfKL3A4Xi-GrYU1_28LGbLHJorIroKCfn72WZ_Uo2Ehsxq5XvEs4nsl6Aa9MBtIcXeVHZq6JotGjXw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=45.23)):

And there might come a point where you say, you know what? I'm not going to do this. But today we're going to talk to my former students, Suzanne Heathcote. Now she rolled the dice. She packed up her bags, moved from London to New York City, a classically trained actress, but she knew she needed something more. How does she go from sitting in a classroom in New York City to becoming the season three show runner of Killing Eve, one of the best shows on television. Let's talk to her and find out. Shall we? Put the phone back in your pocket, Creating Behavior starts now. (singing).

Charlie Sandlan ([01:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ulu25dkB3YGejUYKVV0XxYDMwWLQmyxKf-FEHxZ5PO5vbE1dyWx48Idaw_ko78e8IzoEFQEilO5LHpyjq51bHzXAr7o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=106.73)):

Well, hello, my fellow daydreamers. Rolling the dice on yourself, placing a bet, man, I'll tell you, scary as hell, isn't it? I know that most of you that are listening to this, that's what you're doing. I doubt you'd be listening to me if you weren't. Packing up, moving to a different city, starting from scratch, going into debt, scratch out. Just shitty survival jobs, dealing with rejection, years pass by, and you're saying yourself, God, man, what's going to happen here? How's it going to shift for me? It's scary as hell. I'm 50 years old. I'm rolling the dice on myself again. I had to pack up my entire studio, break my lease, put everything I own in storage, teach out of my office at home. And then of course the time comes, the dice are in your hand, what are you going to do?

Charlie Sandlan ([02:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Da5cg5Ejp3Qv54fGhctzS3cI4jwwAbXhBLlMLcSYFmMYoFl9QffgYh8aeo_Ob2wKuf3rm_xTJeFww9B1oVcO2LnDiuM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=162.63)):

So, here I am, getting ready to relaunch the studio, new physical space in the fall. Scary, that I can tell you. But when you got a dream, when you've got a life's purpose, there's no other option. And so that's why I'm really excited to share with you my interview and my talk with Suzanne. She came to the Maggie Flanigan Studio, God, I don't know, 10 years ago. Came all the way from London. What I remember about Suzanne is how fucking funny she was. She was incredibly talented. You could see it. She had instincts. I knew she was a writer. That she had written some plays, but she wanted to deepen her emotional accessibility. She'll talk about that here.

Charlie Sandlan ([03:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Pl4o2d8Y38CoWe9w8hr2n_j_wkdNqqvPkjzbs9gW68Ej8eqF-Z_LeC0StS6Wb3jqHkG_UGJfG6E_3wkHlyO9yISqjWU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=215.87)):

But man, she had some really tough stretches, but she's got tenacity. She's got grit. She kicked down as many doors as she could. And now she just finished her season three as show runner for one of the best shows on TV, Killing Eve. She's got a writing and developing deal now with AMC and she's working at the top of the profession. So how did she do it? How did she work through those early years of struggle, of trying to find a door that's unlocked?

Charlie Sandlan ([04:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ud0JigeunGYYxYX38Ywxv9TMxwUpHhP9IsAgfQwkkbGv5e4_PTWhwJI0ePiStj32jMcGeMGQFI8KZLuEaDUYgcS63II&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=263.01)):

Well, she's opened a few, I'd say, and she learned a hell of a lot. She's got so much to share with you guys. She's seen thousands of auditions. She's going to talk about what she's taken away from that process. And hopefully you guys will find some inspiration from her. Anything is possible if you have a vision, a goal that you set for yourself and then you pursue it with relentless tenacity. At the top, I was asking her about her time at the studio. How does a well-trained classically trained actress living in London, hop on a plane, come to New York City to learn the Meisner technique? And this is how we started our conversation. Suzanne Heathcote everybody.

Suzanne Heathcote ([05:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=__sjTi-7dUTF7fXOIeWZtnV_vIebfYV8RDWkbGwYuF72ySJ0DGhnKcjzWZRDNeNn2MtcdNIJmXlp6bun5jmQN8Ymj6Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=321.01)):

I look back at that time at the studio actually. It was such a significant period for me. I mean, I just moved to New York. I just moved to the States from London on my own, which everyone told me was crazy at the time. And I couldn't understand why until I got there. And then I was like, oh, this is really hard, actually, moving to a city where you don't really know many people. But I was so excited to be at the studio and I'm still very good friends with people who were in my class in my year. And it really did. It changed my life being there. It was such an intense period for me. I'd studied acting in England, very classically British training when I left school. And I had never really learned to emotionally tap in.

Suzanne Heathcote ([06:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KdCRL7ezX9pMo1oJfU6zv6GGWrnWA-ToJglE-V_Sew8fXi2TMvQMKYj9ufpV5fYHS56H3AhwI-Fbey-sX1GQyz57zrQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=369.78)):

So technically I felt like, oh, I knew how to project and all those sorts of things. And the sort of stagecraft of it, I was relatively competent with. And so I started at the studio with this false sense of security thinking, well, yeah, I mean, I've acted before. I know what I'm doing. I just want some tips. I just want some advice on how to improve what I already know. And I felt so out of my debt from the beginning, because emotionally I was very British, I suppose, in that sense, that it was very untapped. And I talk about that time to my actor friends in Britain, people I started with here. And I say to them that I feel that Meisner is such a necessary technique. And it's so necessary, I feel, to learn it. It just gave an extra depth of understanding to me in terms of the behavior that you're creating.

Suzanne Heathcote ([07:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oJVwF8Tzspr6wDx8qsuqp6YUM7NM608CIkpqJkeKRg9YDB0BUNjMRQQ1acOLTu69bnn4CmZN_9BSUFYWC7DdD1BCUMQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=433.89)):

And then that really informed my writing. In terms of writing character, it only deepened what I was already doing. I was already writing plays at that point, but yeah, it had a huge influence on my writing, certainly. I look back now and I realized that when I was in England and when I was acting, I was acting from the neck up as it were. It was very proficient and I could do the voices. And as I say, I could be heard in the backseat. I could do all of that stuff. I could remember my blocking. I was a technically sound actor. It was like painting the walls before really making sure the brick work was there. It looked good on the surface, but actually it lacked a depth, not always, but it was very inconsistent.

Suzanne Heathcote ([08:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zZT6qh4cNLoy_dpC2DRUbv6YayTBFJtE7t1YC2PunSG-Zw5LbyyJxpMfIdnBKmpRnzTDukbRzLP12y-2Y2JYBnnHCw0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=488.51)):

And I found the work at the studio so hard, which was such a shock to me, because I didn't think I would find it hard. I don't know what I thought it would be. I was so unprepared, looking back probably in the best way, but I didn't know anything. In the UK, the Meisner Technique isn't known. I didn't know repetition. I mean, I couldn't have been more of a novice and I felt like I was 10 steps behind everyone else. And the first year, particularly, it was just, oh God, I remember walking the streets after class, just racking my brain, trying to think of exercises. It consumed me. It was really hard, but in the best possible way. It definitely made me a better actor.

Charlie Sandlan ([08:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U-pedtYaUcC4iawz3qDthYsyUitzUujPhUqLlU_AcCWE073ivNZq-AVTxQQkzemz4CRF2ImGyWjjnWVdKWMxqu4EjDE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=538.11)):

Well, it's interesting because you've spent the last eight years behind the scenes and writing. How did your writing change after the Meisner work? Previous circumstance and acting relationship and objective and the moment to moment work and cause and effect, how did it change your approach to writing?

Suzanne Heathcote ([09:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-gCK7NHIAR_zBZdFMi74cA58sSvYJfMKGcznwmneI8ohrRxe1iGymKkpgKeqqZDINiZIZeWv4CWgFaLHVh98e3CfT4c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=559.04)):

Well, it's so interesting. Actually, I've just finished a pilot funnily enough. And I was writing a scene and I just find myself sitting there. I kind of done several types of this scene and the dialogues, funny enough, I think. The character sound okay. But I was going round and round in circles and I had to stop myself and say, "Okay, what is the scene about?" I have my protagonist here. On the surface, it's about her bumping into someone she knew from school. Fine, but actually, what is happening to this character in this scene? And I really have to think about that. And if I'm like, well, nothing, it's just a funny moment, the scene has to go. It doesn't earn its place in that script. It has to be doing something to that character for it to really earn its place.

Suzanne Heathcote ([10:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=El1YaDQXEDOXHGD7xx2OKmzK6MgMEj1VyXQ5YFilNqLzL89mL1HgBbcMj21qI5mjdSnzBZdcgihiaPIA6RHguy2hsGE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=610.39)):

Now, average Joe will watch TV and they won't say, well, this scene is really about her feeling that her journey since childhood hasn't been ... Or that she's feeling inadequate or she's feeling guilty or remorse or any of those things, I just watch it. And they maybe think it's a funny scene about someone who's bumped into someone from high school, but I have to earn it in that sense. And I think all of my acting training has definitely led into me thinking in those ways and really that the dialogue that it's saying so much more than what is being said. And I really try and think in those terms as I'm writing.

Charlie Sandlan ([10:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=u84_T1Bp8iMAIub0DGvbSMzcior9ceVILrKHwata25gJ7VAC5Xew8h0vTk2dhNgUm9P0hapbWCYRixcqgv8WXtpi5RU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=651.21)):

Is there a moment where you say to yourself, this was the break? This was the moment that opportunity and preparation met?

Suzanne Heathcote ([10:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cHT5nMUbWYMMsr9Pr9vX-XGZqGDcupx0xuQbwLv7dSAB-6FTYH7FjHj5yf5hc0VsEamclFhot0wH3RWcZi2BSB3l8cE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=658.74)):

Yeah, there was a moment actually. I mean, it's always incremental. In every career, everyone speaks of sort of, if you're an actress, maybe that suddenly everyone knows who you are, but there have been hundreds incremental moments that lead to that, even though to the public it may seem like one. One was, I was still living in New York. Like everyone, I felt like at that time, I had like five jobs and was really struggling to make rent. I was teaching in a community college and I was a personal assistant for someone. I mean, you name it, I was doing. I was running all over town and I was trying to write in the evenings.

Suzanne Heathcote ([11:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wWMFsOq0VVyEi3YLOoOALJFTu94iKPbTSPNdpeFk3p35EZ7WNC_th-JyUvtOABh2eWB59mnPR7dMZ_9wsEIer_qeKFc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=698.78)):

I just woke up and I realized I was in my thirties and had no health insurance. And I was living in a tiny apartment in Brooklyn, sharing my space. I was just like, this isn't sustainable. And one's going to come in and save me. No one's going to wave a magic wand then suddenly everything's fixed. And the debt I owe my credit card is gone and all those things. So I just thought, okay, I want to stay in America. I love America. And I feel, it's kind of going to sound very hippy deeper here, but I feel America's my spiritual home. So I was like, I want to stay here. How am I going to make this work? And I knew for me as a writer at that moment, I needed to be in LA. I needed to write for TV. I thought if every single of my plays gets produced this year, I'm still not going to earn enough money. It's just not enough money-

Charlie Sandlan ([12:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xrj7fXOl6pLbeFCb-2mozIhdmaH6HXbPFh2Tv-7ssL45ZNd0sX1h7yNuwJBP4RNd8_mcgyJWY11bVCWUuwG5e4AntwE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=750.96)):

No, there's no money in theater.

Suzanne Heathcote ([12:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YQsJrMjrG1D0_WZ9_r_mzpTj19CkLVHqQ_6He2qgojBzSjpuMnK13mZdcKl-lqjeoJBMOtx2MrZQcJnm8HBLAS0l6iY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=752.47)):

So was like, I have to write for the screen, which I've wanted for super long time anyway. So I wrote a list of everyone I knew who knew someone in LA. I mean, anyone. And I put it up above my laptop and I'm very British about this stuff. I hate calling in favors. No one wants to write those emails, but I just thought, this is the moment where I'm going to try and cash in every chip I've got. So I wrote emails to everyone I knew. And I said as politely as I could, I'm going to LA. I was going to stay in a friend's apartment. He was traveling around South America. So he said give me a hundred bucks, she'd stay in my apartment for 10 days. I put the flight on a credit card and I was like, I'm just going to go out for 10 days. I'm just going to have every meeting I can try and have.

Suzanne Heathcote ([13:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HWKkowI2Mmoke7dkOVhaZt5zn9MKewX92doPOqsBsFwW0eZOeC6DQ46ajmkj-o02OLCezAjr0MXARbf5J9kNzmrxtPo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=798.24)):

In that there was a very good friend of mine, Mike LaVoy. He said to me, "I got a friend who I went to college with who's like an assistant of someone at ICM or like an assistant of an assistant of someone." He said, "I don't even know what department he's in, but if you want, I can email him." And I said, "That would be amazing." I got an email from this guy, Ryan, who actually I know now, and he's very successful, but yeah, he was an assistant at the time, I believe.

Suzanne Heathcote ([13:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=F78Kkirw3-GheKe2j9pMLrYiT0B8lEPgXhe8iTiSukcOGFLLcdqiLu3m7izIIlmf5JoA8pX02VIwhm2UCp_RgSDAP-o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=829.41)):

And he called me and he said, "Hey, Mike put us in touch and I'm happy to have coffee with you when you're here. Can I just ask, do you have a show reel as an actor?" And I said, "No, all the work, I did in London was in theater. I don't have a show reel." He said, "Okay. Do you have any screenplays or pilots?" I said, "No, everything I've written is for theater." He said, "Okay, I'm just going to lay it there, no one's going to sign you. I just would hate for you to come out here with the wrong expectations."

Charlie Sandlan ([14:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jUN1fMO6YQAkgDbNvljwLHnKfgI9JoHp2DDPNPSszbcA4FfU6Xlp7kvxHfijSScHAeASql7MK2eyPP2ZzdrdMJk27Sg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=861.34)):

That's a harsh bit of advice to get.

Suzanne Heathcote ([14:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jvz8OhRhMhOqSTQq5ptjrPrx_AqNWeZVoEoC2O-27Eig10jbo6xsgVX24GIdTc_HSkNJN5e3h-ym2a-wpDq87ADXJck&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=863.66)):

I was like, "Okay." I said, "That's fine. I totally understand." He said, "But I'm happy to meet you, have coffee." I said, "Sure. And I said on the phone, "I think, look, I appreciate my theater credits. They probably get a bit lost in translation. I have good theater credits from London, just so you know. I'm just kind of bolstering myself up as best I could, but I said, but I do understand, but it'd be great just to chat for half an or something." So I flew over, he was my first meeting. I had a few bunch of meetings kind of set up very loosely. He emailed me as I landed and said, "I'm actually going to pull a British guy into the meeting as well, because I just thought, why not? So if you want to meet him, this guy called Matt, he's in the talent department." I was like, "Great."

Suzanne Heathcote ([15:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zc_9GoFALpVKaCE70SMK_vHXCbX9nCkhsRwgbVCOI0yQDEeBNdftkpQqWrhg7NXmMHx_kGR8JC9Scb-Fwou3Mu_qGmY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=911.82)):

Matt and I absolutely hit it off. And we just started chatting and I said, "Well, I've been writing for a long time. I'm a playwright." And he said, "Can I read something?" And I said, "I've only got plays." He said, "That's fine. That's fine. Just send me anything you want." So I went back to my apartment that night and I sent three plays and I said, "Look, I don't expect you to read all three, obviously. Here's a log line for each of them. Just pick one you want to read, because I couldn't decide what to send in."

Suzanne Heathcote ([15:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=aN5a5wLId9lOK3i2oJN79aByw-zlymkOKYFAGmpuDWZ5OM7h8G1RK2Kx-BM9njNVEd3nQEZNpXeLSBKcqLqKEjQmmeI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=941.94)):

I went for dinner that evening. And I went to bed, woke up and I'd had an email at like two in the morning. And he said, "I've just read all three. Can I send this to someone in New York?" I said, "Sure." And the next thing I knew, I was getting phone calls from my agent in the UK. I had a lead agent in the UK and they were like, "ICM want to roll out the red carpet. They want to sign you. They want to rep you, acting, writing dah, dah, dah." And I was like, "Oh my God." It instantly blew up in that sense, New York are calling. So I flew back to New York, had this huge meeting in this boardroom at ICM. It was like five of them there. And Matt was videoing in from LA. They were just like, really, we just want to rep you. We want to do this.

Charlie Sandlan ([16:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LZjlY7lR8Qlv21dHXFOK6yLerUZOyynpXia8Et4Ict5jo02fa23ONXe4UQi9BpsmuxDazz4sliTpjimmg-mvuJszkKM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=982.09)):

All from the three plays that you sent him?

Suzanne Heathcote ([16:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1H9t7FNXvsTS7cjdOMWNFiRaml09fm0eVADgDbyp6NDmAXyQ3b1_Z9O_AEZAOalIukQX9vb3h2VkIAFIqtsEIO0agII&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=983.74)):

Yeah. From the coffee with the guy who said I'd never get signed. So that was definitely a moment where I just felt very legitimized. I mean, of course it then takes two years for anything to actually ... You think, my life is going to change. I've just signed with ICM. Everything's still slow going. But that for me was a huge moment. And actually just in my personal life, in terms of my family, I know that some of my family were concerned about me being in New York. I'd had some health issues in the past and they would just say, "What are you doing? I mean, this isn't going anywhere." Once I signed with ICM and was signed on all fronts, it legitimized what I was doing to them as well. They're not in the business, my family, or most of them aren't. I've got a brother who's an editor who always kind of understood, but yeah, it was validating, the whole experience of having moved out there in that moment.

Charlie Sandlan ([17:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XEZczJmufai-T6TnNtmUPDAt3tJnes1Sc_yP8XEXOF_BTj4Qfgt_GEqE_LeHSUZie3Dh6yyjf--HcAul_ch0NVA6Bkg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1032.85)):

So did you move out there after getting signed?

Suzanne Heathcote ([17:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2YQMq0_EcznPo7cG8SjzAkmu2Jca7KFq5553le7d4k-lK_fbeP5720Z_IqgIHhZwCu-C3HxmTdeEaNgxgc3Dq5cCcQo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1036.51)):

Yeah. But it was about a year after that, I told them right up front, I said, I want to move to LA. As I said, I have a brother who's an editor and I'd always loved screen and wanted to work in TV and film, which actually leads, funny enough, to the second turning point. There are probably two major turning points. And the second was, I'd been with ICM, I don't know, a year and a half, two years maybe. I really wanted to get things moving with my TV career, writing for TV. I didn't feel like I was getting that many meetings, just things just weren't really moving. And I kept going out there and spending chunks of time out there and then nothing was really happening. And that summer I got two play writing residencies back to back. One was at SPACE on Ryder Farm. I don't know if you know that. It's upstate New York.

Charlie Sandlan ([18:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=izCZp0jKf_iOIwQJPdwG3fGsyK8i4wvRc-NF03bcjp7eTjHYCV51At0IA46FodmL5o7804DtPbXJzvHMvpy7vHdijL8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1082.84)):

Yeah. Emily Simoness.

Suzanne Heathcote ([18:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oq6GIFkgG4bgmG7A0NUMkbBx4lw2vroHvV7yq5SF7FFwNFAkgIpCIFErndjMOdDhveJTg0SEAQ7cKVjKyPc61Fe4Vy4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1084.87)):

Yes. Who is one of my favorite people on the planet.

Charlie Sandlan ([18:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mhbyA2xFrgbKWY1iNdsGrbuollMRbWwz2yYfFn4M5yOKIsFSYSp6vKx6JOX3SBcsFVC8Cb_qi_mNsSKzFGCbdYctBLU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1088.92)):

It's a beautiful space. Everything she's created there is stunning and idyllic and beautiful.

Suzanne Heathcote ([18:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=heBr9azRLOffyJaKR4bZFH2eVP189DgKTlMy0bRPVX8fIvpsIvhH193hJDlZFgtHy8VPrwsu0y0gjF6kA-O5pRP-xPU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1095.83)):

It's just amazing. And I feel I owe a huge debt to SPACE really because ... So I was on what they call the working farm. So I was up there for like six weeks that summer. The whole point of the residency was that I was writing a play. When I submitted my application, it was for playwriting. So I arrived and I thought, I really want to be writing a spec script for TV. I got to get this career going. I still have no money. I still have to work five jobs. Like my life hadn't changed materially. But I'm on this residency. My room and board is paid for, and I need to be writing a play. That's why I'm here, so I have to honor that.

Suzanne Heathcote ([18:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bccX7bjOPGalzDsVnY4hCc3MWgZmh9GdjzlYg4pQbg3Hq-I17o5FTym9FxeoIcYAmfayk8Wi0Oug-0d9WbRd3L4aF9w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1133.84)):

The last thing I felt I needed was another play to sit in a drawer and remain unproduced. But I was like, well, that's what I'm here to do. I had for the first time in my life, real time to take walks and really think about what I wanted to write. And it was a difficult writing period for me. And every day I opened my notebook and I was like, okay, what is this play about? And I felt like I was just starting that conversation with myself every day, weeks and weeks. And then finally in my final stint there, something clicked into place and the play kind of came together and I actually wrote it very quickly and it had a reading, playwrights horizons through SPACE.

Suzanne Heathcote ([19:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pBNSbZJ470sV_83riRFPRvqpMoVm3qNzsMgNAuWJyu-6ID7cjHsunHdaswntFPyK6i6iFOuzeUyTVN9Fj6wUKO7MU-o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1174.04)):

And I saw my theater agent there. She came to the reading and the reading had gone well. And she said, do you want me to send this out? And I said, sure. I mean, I could do more work on it, but to be honest, it's going to take everyone a year to read the thing anyway. So just get it out there. And I flew back to LA and it was, I think the next day she called me and she said, this is really bizarre, but someone has read the play already in Los Angeles. And he's actually a really well known writer, playwright, TV writer called Roland Jones, who's starting up a theater company, and he wants to produce it. I was like, "What?" I mean in theater this never happened.

Charlie Sandlan ([20:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=eklyvqOv4Rg99bcKt15NJy_XZfGShqnwi0PKUEH3IxyCWWJkx5UdpPKs6dLeGvIVnd5n21Rys1XE3TsLsKxG7uS-PAc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1217.93)):

Never. Not that fast.

Suzanne Heathcote ([20:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=P-eajF7BZLeAofFPpeG0tZc0aMLGTfeiTi0y6QS78ZHxnggpMOmZSfzuXpTdSW5G8PW8lh68xqnwVXnJlAWO48EnUiA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1218.29)):

I didn't know if he even read the thing. And he's in LA. I mean, the whole thing was bizarre. He wants to meet you and just talk to you about it. So we got in touch and he emailed me and I went and met him. We went for dinner. I was so hungry. I was so poor. I'd given up my sublet in New York. I was staying in someone's apartment in LA. I mean, I was like homeless at that moment. And we met and he's now a very good friend of mine. Born and raised LA. So he likes anyone who likes LA. He said, "What are you doing here? You want to write TV?" And I said, "Yeah." And he said, this play will get you every TV job you want.

Suzanne Heathcote ([20:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=B7WF0TIQJSD8g7cjQgfkBw6kkn0NLrjMuQdJvpBb1M-OT_vJjIeRGI1KTF2x4bJmJU7uF0pD9Y94c-bwTROqm_zV8KM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1257.56)):

And he sent it to loads of people. He's very influential. And then my agents got it, my TV agents. And they said, "Oh, this is your sample." And that play has got me every single job I've had on TV. I mean, it proved to me that you kind of have your own version of how you think things should go. And then there's what is presented to you in life. And kind of, if you just go with the opportunities that are thrown at you, I was given a play writing residency that I didn't think was going to yield me anything. And it ended up completely changing my TV career. I got a call from my manager in LA. I just finished a job, finished a job in New York. And she called me in LA and said, "We've just had from BBC America, they're looking for someone for season three and would you be interested?"

Suzanne Heathcote ([21:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Z6IiLARtdGjTRpgw0wfCtT28WfwZt2g69VOLNwfimMmPpB62iOJQPtzgPTXtKXqS1H7oWBa67ERuGEQ-m06XFa3K0Ac&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1313.83)):

And I was like, "Of course." It's like, yeah. I really didn't know any more than that. I just went in for general meeting that went well. Phoebe wasn't there. I didn't meet Phoebe until after I'd been hired actually. We were in touch with each other and obviously knew each other evolved. And so we then met up once I got to London and she was a huge help and a great support, I have to say. It's a tough gig, Killing Eve. It's hard. It's a very hard show in as much as it's sort of very specific characters. You're trying to keep it new and yet reinvented at the same time. There are difficult parameters around it. And they know that. I mean, they said that even when I went and met with them.

Suzanne Heathcote ([22:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6nUtOegX0UXzPtKWeR4Tedh6BIX4NeSPk3Nn3TiTv68HjRmVvMMEkkF0knmjEVAqi2TFMl4XzZyfhcS_BgdFiz6bRoE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1364.35)):

And really your job, I felt, when you're taking on a show that's been established through other writers prior to you, for me, the job wasn't about making it my season in as much as it was about honoring what was there and trying to take it to new places while maintaining the rules of the world. Third season, that's tough. I wrote on a zombie show, Fear the Walking Dead, which is the spinoff to the Walking Dead. Again, I was in for the third season and it's hard. We'd all sit around and we were like, "How do you keep this the same and keep the rules of the world and yet find new things to do?" And I was very much hired for that job as a sort of character writer. They wanted people to really imbue the characters and add some depth to the characters. I mean, when it's life or death like that all the time, you're like, "How do you really find the moments where you can add the nuance to those characters and what they're feeling and keep it fresh?" It's always a challenge.

Charlie Sandlan ([23:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cUXw8zTkkhr3zy_v53rrnjP7oZRBVOZGm4yIz-XmwTHCKte_Me9hHUDj5Ml7lJO4l467wEaVWh4kfyEgG5qRRIChNwQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1434.5)):

I know that a show runner is different in America than it is in England. You don't have total control. It's not like this is your baby. And there's a lot of other voices that you've got to listen to. So what's it like to be the head writer, but yet not have total control over how it goes?

Suzanne Heathcote ([24:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FDnU2FVcZQqX1bYP2o6e8_6dl9lKdML1ySFJUzRTXJn_bkFCAE6jrufdzjYdVxWbFdOez46_uB3HkCiuRASHszIepD8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1454.53)):

I mean, with Killing Eve, the production company and everyone around it, it's such a well-oiled machine. And because it had run for two seasons very successfully, I didn't want to go in there and kind of roll up my sleeves and reinvent the wheel in that sense. For the most part, I was very happy that production was doing its thing and I wasn't running it in the way that I would have done had it been an American production. The writer isn't in the edit in the UK. I give notes, I give extensive notes, but I'm not in the room. It's more like film, the director is there.

Suzanne Heathcote ([24:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=eq2yIT-kEAq-5GHvxeDjZpqIslle1_0tthUKIoWeIw_OqiYI1zbEygD7ovya8LoAlZuKNGSXxG1Mpbe16BVsgfgcwoA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1492.79)):

Whereas in the U.S., if you have a different director of an episode, they'll be in the edit for maybe four days, and then the show runner steps in, and they're the ones there with the editor working on it for the next two weeks, or however long to get the episode, you get final cut in that sense. But in the UK, the director is in the edit for weeks and weeks. It's just a different model. We had great directors. I've been very fortunate in that sense as a writer. And certainly if it was my show and I'd created it, the American model where you're in the edit in person, it's just a different level of control. It is just a different level of control.

Charlie Sandlan ([25:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9shvIq3TYN81WIrF7rZIhXU6fPvHvJo2g1CGreNOUnID7ylmj9ty_8h933khXWG9d6lVngKfpJf7Zn3ebHVZQq4tmo4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1534.14)):

I think it's the best written season. I think it's the most interesting. I think it's the most nuanced. I think it's the most interesting. I think it's the funniest, which doesn't surprise me because I just always remembered you just being a very, very funny actor with a really good sense of humor. And I just thought it popped up a lot. The season that takes place when she goes home, there were so many just little things that were just so interesting to me. Who thinks of a gnome or a fan for a prize, for throwing cowpies. Are these all your ideas and just your sense of humor? You're just like, oh, that's fucking interesting.

Suzanne Heathcote ([26:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=v_xNlhZkOlvGKRRuFufDgxv-U6rUPCVDo7Q26NgosJmO6Xjf5_7YjHVdkeagYKq-OeAFEHx1jcZPg51ysVlpZFf6igg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1577.01)):

In those instances, I mean, I have to give credit where it's due. Shannon Murphy, who directed that particular episode, episode five, she came to me and she was like ... Actually the fan idea, I think she'd seen something. So the fair that they go to, the Russian fair that they have, there's a YouTube video of almost identical fair taking place in Russia. I mean, everything from like the guys dressing up as women and racing. The cow dung throwing and all of that, it's all in there.

Suzanne Heathcote ([26:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-5HBkHD1Weqf0_SlrH1O_g1pEBSj4_HX_53lReau_GnQmhXq9mn7Xs772aPvXEqK4BcM4fDXcZdrKrUffpPzEsU-yko&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1611.8)):

So I showed that to the director and I was like, this is what I based it on. This is it. And she then watched some other stuff. And she said, Oh my God, I've seen this thing. And she said, I really think we should do the prizes. Like really random, like electrical goods. So that came from her. I mean, as soon as I heard it, I was like, that's amazing. A lot of the visual moments came from Shannon. Those like very small nuanced moments. She was absolutely brilliant and really took that episode and put it on another level, I felt. And I was really allowed to do, I have to say, so gentle, the production company. That was an episode where I was really allowed to do my own thing, because it was outside the realm of the show.

Charlie Sandlan ([27:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2MUveb04UJedHd0EiMZZJRVdquFvTElu8VpDzd3dxwZwRXkSxKTW6ysvrLUcntg7jpEqyE7jZxYhqLTiRUQWVkFO1A4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1653.87)):

It was the best episode of the season by far. The most interesting. It was such a complicated relationship with her and her mother. I just thought it was so deep. It was so complicated. And to catch all of that in what? Maybe 10 minutes of screen time, total, between the two of them, I thought it was amazing because you really caught just a very deeply traumatized relationship.

Suzanne Heathcote ([27:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UywPBFibjHY8Abbs1DmsYGVku94S68QPOj6l0owcNoZCpy-qKaV5J082FBikGmdxON0J8qj0OkI0GvVZRi8atPfkaqk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1678.29)):

Yeah, I was really interested in us seeing the source of the damage. And of course it begs the question in a nature nurture. I thought it was equally important as to Jodie, I have to say, that we didn't answer that question and that we didn't reveal too much, because you want my character to maintain mystery. And the concern was when I said, I really want to do a bottle episode where we go back and meet Villanelle's family, what's remaining of it. The concern, and a justified concern was that we don't want to peak too far behind the curtain because she's so ethereal and mysterious as a character, and you really don't want to lose that. I don't know if you have the saying in the States, see how the sausage is made?

Charlie Sandlan ([28:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kXZU3IH9216aSlGfxhQuCu3X9hKKLTS-Bfl5-jUCultloRccfd5wCcEoZ3-xtXe_yXt2Jx2_VElcgGkit5aQrJ4xla8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1728.64)):

Oh, yeah. Of course.

Suzanne Heathcote ([28:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DUcd09t8tb9_i_vvnVxLD_I0fo4Moim1PJMRoC_ygn2EYBF0BldP7NaZQ-5PhvZSZlzGVNZ7s5RCazmfk6hMxWszs_s&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1729.97)):

Yeah. Yeah. And so it's just, you don't want to make it too every day, because it takes everything away from that character. So it was finding that line between revealing what was necessary and the oddities of it. I wanted it to be, and again, I felt Shannon was the perfect director for this because I wanted it to be odd. The feeling of it, the family set up, the dynamic, the Elton John scene. When I wrote that they all sang this Elton John song, I was like, I know this is bonkers. I was just so lucky in Shannon that she read it and totally understood what that needed to be. And the Elton John gave us the song, which no one thought he would.

Charlie Sandlan ([29:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=m5HdSu5BfsDNgiCUo4PaOVWXWVmxDhH2dMZ81QOjZ3jNytB4QTap7kBnYfsMSmjKVYx-RT30vEbCB0XVZ87kXbZpbEU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1776.58)):

I think it was my favorite scene of the entire series to date. You know what it reminded me of? An independent activity with an acting idea and everybody just playing full out with themselves. It was such a non-sequitur. It really had nothing to do with anything. It was just like a window into Russian life. I mean, of course, why not be fanatic about Elton John?

Suzanne Heathcote ([30:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=s7aT9Vx3zEvBuRwkmA7tp3ebKubf-3oP7NEowiHjTn4OWswTKmyfMCdSzAvF7m38gMhIhOO-YNgP6rXVhJnrahSoHS0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1801.89)):

Yeah. Well, that was so funny because when I wrote the character of Boris, I really wanted him to have something Western that he was obsessed with. I wanted one of her half-brothers to be someone she could really relate to who was kind of an oddity. I thought, yeah, this kid. I don't know why I thought Elton John. Like it'd be really interesting. There was just something about it. I have no idea where it came from.

Suzanne Heathcote ([30:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=h5HN_2dJF9OQDqb5wUHoJSCJsKWYfQT7GEXjl25dCAb5fxq7EVklW29IY2JacabLJ4Dtu4W0JpNoTBwJNvAGijyh2bg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1826.19)):

And so I wrote it in and the producers really responded to it and they said, "Oh yeah, we love the Elton John stuff. Keep at it." So I went with it. And then I was researching, just for some dialogue actually, where he's trying to figure out where Villanelle has been versus where Elton John had been on tour. And I was looking at where has Elton John been on tour actually. I looked at it. And it was only then I discovered he was the first Western artist to tour, post-Cold War, to tour Russia. So he is actually huge in Russia. He's beloved in Russia. I had no idea. So it then just made total sense that actually he would be this Elton John fanatic. So yeah, it was just odd how that worked out.

Charlie Sandlan ([31:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3IjSSga6rFtCNCzhQ3kSOzEeMwOGGnmWYd76IRW6SAoYTT_QWik57xkfym7KRn7eXShcOhgP5kAaSDimXyHMRV-UVEc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1868.43)):

How did you write it?

Suzanne Heathcote ([31:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5pbyohBwU62gaioEtHp-t5p7fQle1GkelR8_AGJ_UTQ5B8FQuaZT1uu3YOA9KJpljzbKQz37HNcfjfpo3Hlw0ibhI4g&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1872.87)):

So I had them playing. It was like the murder mystery game they're playing. I think I wrote that someone started like beating out a rhythm on the table with their hands. Initially it sounds quite traditional. You assume it's going to be like a Russian song that they all start singing. And then Boris appears and he hits play on his phone or whatever it is or whatever technology they were going to have and start singing this Elton John song and that they all joined in and stand up and just start singing it. And I think I even wrote like some of the lyrics in, as I then described what Villanelle was doing in the meantime.

Suzanne Heathcote ([31:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_a6GSJ3WFqFdIqKdnOUTKx6FET2-pHyyqlojdU_Mdu7OVhZAuzRTYiw4RJNU2eGzT3GCLIkIyHmZlOAEx6REBk0LN8I&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1911.69)):

I think I even wrote that she's about to start singing and then it cuts. I mean, Shannon directed that so brilliantly, that final moment. But yeah, I was pretty specific about, I'm quite controlling as a writer, I think because my brother's an editor, I'll write the jump cuts. I'll write like, inhales to speak, cut two. I'll often write that in because it's just the way I see the storytelling.

Charlie Sandlan ([32:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=heSBud58fZFmLgBM61jwjthvXVVjdd7d3AxwJiGRtCErBm1gOj7gtak3qg3JPRynCbZv-t5x0Pomv-EfXt9GyPJxhfI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1937.96)):

So you're living it out in your imagination?

Suzanne Heathcote ([32:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NknQBBxcNun28Mg5d615hp7m7VhmDs0TCW-yiOvV1EGSZxP8kNFMJ-qpLIsTF-s_PX3LSgcxrFCBYOCGDAm8WxB_gSI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1941.04)):

Totally. I'm visualizing every moment. And I often, if I'm writing something new, I'll try and think of an actor for the part. Alive or dead, it could be Maggie Smith when she was 20. I mean, it doesn't have to be someone I'm literally going to cast, but it will help me when I'm imagining that character, I then somehow hear what they're saying better.

Charlie Sandlan ([32:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xhAEEsGI60JdOEvPe8V1xAMFp5NAFrQsDkIKlfctGFP2xrUWn7iQcK5FD7mfJFG6K7fqItH9CKdRnYvhwESwQZytW3c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1974)):

Well, when you started conceding Dasha, did you have Harriet Walter in mind?

Suzanne Heathcote ([32:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-a0dE9Pom-zjphviwciuvkLj9zVAxKk2mEVZg6P69GouB8QbzCUv_5bflDB1qID8qdTBZi3Yqubo4Uyam_GtzoxBeqk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1974.03)):

I don't know if I'd have ever even dreamt we'd have got her actually, initially, but once Harriet was on board, then yes. I mean, obviously. I mean, that's the joy of writing for TV once it's cast is that you know exactly who you're writing for and you can have that relationship with the actor.

Charlie Sandlan ([33:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ea372hQ6q9SdfivVJN-s6SabqAcebsY6XzF8D2xKwgHGCYXsW64V6BanE4Fi5jpT2FWV6TbK6HYO-9x9XU9pdpTbUmI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1991.67)):

The most interesting character I thought in season three, the best work I've ever seen her do, it was such a departure from the classy styled, prim and proper, shit that she usually does. It was an incredible piece of character acting.

Suzanne Heathcote ([33:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=BCouVRYlnGDoUR8vOv-YFvzjcrCritrAbCOPAtdZnvh7ziYby2GaeeP4C2Nptm5k2Uj-lm3C76wkYump_5R6WJGe5xE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2010.11)):

Yeah. She's absolutely amazing. And really embraced it. I mean, she's such a consumer pro in every sense. She's everything you would imagine her to be. And yeah, I think, just really had fun with it. She's not normally cast in that type of character. And so I think she really had fun just being able to be this crazy. I mean, that character was like when I had my first meetings at BBC America and AMC, I pitched that character very early on. I was like, I want this older woman who has trained Villanelle. Yeah. So to have someone that talented then inhabit the part, that's what you dream of really.

Charlie Sandlan ([34:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iDerWC34VnGxKt4TqtxR2q0fecdux8J9p0yNiiRYLgLwIdDFxd-yKyd_jB5OqiNFaRbPJPYAvlhPm8nSOrhVmjkmFh0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2065.84)):

Yeah. Absolutely. Do you do a Google search, murders?

Suzanne Heathcote ([34:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=w64hoS13CwKIWSj0gACFfQY4huLvTOqBZhU4GkPe-dk01-jBqi-I7WPTaFLSoZD3pTqdigUxI0TtiI7fBTNAFqE41JI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2070.57)):

We had a psychiatrist and we would speak to people, but actually the thing I really found was you can't broad stroke anyone. Even if they have a disorder. If someone's a psychopath, you can't just say, oh, well, a psychopath would do X. It's like saying, well, a redhead would do X. Or someone with blue eyes would do Y. It's like, well, no. And so if ever the question was posed to what would a psychopath do? I would say, no, that's not the question. The question is, what would this psychopath do? It's specific to this particular human and this disorder is specific to this human as well. And you have to think of it in that way. You can't broad stroke it. Tony Soprano is a psychopath. I mean, the fact that he can kill all those people, and yet he is different from Villanelle as different could be. You cannot broad stroke it in that way.

Charlie Sandlan ([35:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ch_m6aJQoofxjd367cUK-tE2IEjS9JLE3alDM44tike94XeHR4sCa3_5UJhD3P5MJcS6JdT6PiGYaL5qNzlHaWxvR4E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2128.68)):

Did you know that she were going to handle her family the way she did? Did you know that that was going to be the outcome?

Suzanne Heathcote ([35:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZdKhW9jGtx33xtRNLOIwldvVN1ubFRjf593F8HqmafmgFOL1GVdvblFtS-9x86cvsST3DZ-FdA2N_2tmNyf4Fpfq24Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2132.9)):

I had different perspectives on that. I mean, there was sort of various outcomes. I mean, I felt it would be a mother-daughter standoff. Then really the challenges, how do you then create? I really wanted it to be that there was at least a moment where Villanelle felt, I could stay here. Where she was almost seduced by it. That's what I wanted. She'll be given the smallest of notes, the nuance with which it changes her performance. It will transform her performance in the most subtle, yet apparent way.

Charlie Sandlan ([36:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YKeS4RnMsoHon-1EWyeYiknBCB0egj-Gcx74u2Q5CZVe9joSKH8Jfxr-Xl_Sl_tLD8JBtXnYMrlLgKNVSj0nQSf0GXY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2171.25)):

And the childlike part of her, the childishness, the petulance, all of that, that's not written in the script. That's her take on the character?

Suzanne Heathcote ([36:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=o88w8sg5s5pJ2RlkJxSuz6H3ptm9kuNmv3S3dZBkMQVboqfEdDhYXAD25v1leXOMqKweR-Hlh7nR8DnNir040mbcSQY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2185.01)):

That's her. Yeah. That's all her. I mean, with that show, the blessing of that show is you just have the most phenomenal cast. You're writing for actors at the top of their game, across the board. It's gold standard across the board.

Charlie Sandlan ([36:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=a2oVUMLQjgEbooCrcXWEJIBpo99uQJFYQRpoD9cGqh0vJomIQQewivgf5-JG1mMzZsze03lc5hD8tl1DQhfnnNH26D4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2200.82)):

Fiona Shaw, I mean, unbelievable. I did a masterclass with her. I did BADA back in like '97, and she was one of my teachers.

Suzanne Heathcote ([36:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jVC_tPi9TqseEJc2XxxKQkgDCVe6B1aPj_9BZs5MpcIKkJdrjplA38H06yMQ6pv2G8TH_8wS0MCvO8MyeTSbO_VqcJM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2209.58)):

She said something very astute, which I mentioned to another actor friend of mine who's on a long running show here. And he was like, I am going to say that. He was like, I'm going to take that and say that to myself, because he has a character with a very specific voice. She said to me, "Don't feel you have to write it to sound like Carolyn, I will make it sound like Carolyn." Because as a writer, you can be tempted to sort of ... And then I think that's when you're in the danger of making a character kind of pastiche, because you're writing more for the sound of, this is what I think they would say in the way they would say it rather than remaining true to the character and what are they actually feeling and wanting to communicate in that way.

Suzanne Heathcote ([37:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KAXCcUiTJ8RMflc9ArJn06IAPaLoNvzu6c1VzwKr98Rty1Lxog9qhpvtUUVrIAOKqoOvPE_Kpg0YWhYsc3oaoH7-jcM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2253.27)):

Now, of course, you will have to understand the tone of that character and take that on. But she said, "I will make it sound like Carolyn. That's my job." I thought it was a very good note for me actually. It can become sort of, you're writing more in the style of what she's saying and really thinking about what it is she's communicating.

Charlie Sandlan ([37:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U8-5ctG7QuCMFiU3BHtOsqEB8v5F29Mz2xl7OW5_oBkmx42R6Irfueleq1dPfWwP68Q4hDZAwNhw8OXlffpT7Xv76Ns&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2278.53)):

What did you discover about this process that you didn't know before you got involved with it?

Suzanne Heathcote ([38:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=elb-ZhC-fkyIF5TwvwVpiPIMp8kmRBW1z5eewDUPonB2-WwqkVjQoR3hh94CXfUujRyc_6rmzMIZRuHDaDzl6HeFejQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2282.03)):

I mean, the schedule I was under was crazy. You don't have a writer's room running like you do in America throughout. So it's just writing while you're shooting without ... That was crazy. The hardest things about that job were the best things as well. You've got these amazing characters and you've got Sandra who's just so detailed with her work. We would talk for hours about her character and really in depth. She does so much work beforehand. And it just brings so much to the table with her. And you just have to feel that you're writing up to the standards of those kinds of-

Charlie Sandlan ([38:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=u6hW9aa05Fyb2IAP-QNOBEkabcCYn1fJ-sC1e6o7fdTVGFUuedrzwvkV8PfBOtnHdFUtifbNMkdlN9aTQ_DbcKhFFg4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2323.32)):

That's pressure.

Suzanne Heathcote ([38:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JpLr3HTefjnyT71kltmeYceo5jMmOOph6iaaVMQxA8xV1wZz5MtsBQS04_1NcKz099o8f378Td2TrrR4s5RtEkJIYHw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2324.18)):

It's a lot of pressure. It's a lot of pressure. Yeah.

Charlie Sandlan ([38:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_6qmFULZTfng3McZkIggAad4cyAONX09PrBV8kNw1M7DVthaYcuUeZyNqa4qVg0NuVYTI6-9cHNCN_CKUkEwQDYI7Ao&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2327.74)):

I mean, because you're operating in a completely level now. That was the biggest job you've had to date?

Suzanne Heathcote ([38:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pHRGdNQQwa6ac3Ek4C31sBT7n3pB7QcBLDW9NIdljqxw-O9smwXkcXUPsptlTRzkyraDs_kbD9YQTbAtbhpLektjFS0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2334.34)):

For sure. I mean, because it was such a huge show when I came in. And also just the way the show is. As a writer, you're used to being behind the scenes. No one really knows who writes this episode of this or that episode of that. No one really cares. Nor do you want them to. And suddenly because of that show and just the way it is, I felt that there was a lot of attention on the behind the scenes stuff, which I wasn't used to. It's a very high profile gig. Yeah, there are always challenges with that.

Charlie Sandlan ([39:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JvwQt54hQlx24rhxDVtp4nwPyOY2dtwZlcUh34DZKMwkERdStbOsSYV2UY9f6MUJTKhEM3xdkOSBIoxI1MPwdbKitkE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2368.35)):

Now you're still in the middle of your AMC deal?

Suzanne Heathcote ([39:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mhpdVphWlcheKSpKY3iq7SPOe3uIc8mv19Ta1WFEcec6gMHelzNKbMX_N1v_vFayOND1IJYQxh-KMoWyhnIxGq3NbUU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2370.16)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

Charlie Sandlan ([39:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jILQrC__7W47yYIxV41H-Q4yPeR48vNLl-YZTp8H05BvV7jReofX3wEP-pN1pWcDfAs48Wb7SLg76HUANn_WYiZmakw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2373.33)):

Are you starting something from scratch? Are you able now to like, okay, this is my project. This is my show. This is my pilot. What's that like?

Suzanne Heathcote ([39:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iK-RuyPm8VQ2cSbnaZt4EjUUWBfP6KpeX6tunzAOHbfeU3KSN2oVxaikTH2pthgUkC_WJnn3wM2_bsHjU35QedJVdNo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2387.1)):

I always like to do something completely different from the last job. So like I remember when I finished Fear the Walking Dead, I then went and did this half hour comedy. I like to really just do something very, very different. And someone said, "What do you want to do now?" And I said, "I want to do something from the ground up where I really feel I've got the lump of clay and I am creating characters from scratch and the world from scratch and just the total opposite. So instead of inhabiting this world, I'm creating it." Yeah, I just finished a script actually, which is an original idea. I'm doing a few projects with them right now. I'm just developing a few things. There's an adaptation as well. It's been lovely, actually, just rolling up my sleeves and writing in the old fashion sense.

Charlie Sandlan ([40:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zmS8aiICqhQpoYEAEcuwDoyg0fOFMaLcgNY0mbX3gdqxGvvbT40xtuNheCLNb7zGFORKpA2jYb5-DrXD4pIpQgg8ObA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2436.76)):

Do you start with a character idea or do you start with like an overall kind of concept, whether it's a period of time or a relationship that then just evolves into something? Or?

Suzanne Heathcote ([40:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5SEGk6Hsoe-nnGn4AN3FaTjR4I2CgKW1F_4RzpmYtMgNrtNziFS5LRucyFvk5PEWnX7G-pfuOVldaEeoYmDr9rnUSK8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2448.63)):

It really depends. Often a character or a situation, I'll think of a person and just being in a situation or it could even just be a scene, like a moment between two people that I find interesting. And then I think, well, then I start to expand the world around it. What would have brought these people together, wherever they come from? And then in doing that, you kind of expand the world.

Suzanne Heathcote ([41:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=v0UfhYGGNoLpca96dYTBYWAjghbNQ0pgu8lAeBT4HuOirVdw3gAmLWV8owWs8715f8RV_XBBIc-IeqiQq3KCPuSeySk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2473.73)):

In plays, I definitely start with character. TV is different because you've probably been given something and often there's source material to begin with. A lot of TV now is based on IP or a book or an article or something. It's rare that it's completely original. I mean, the script I've just done was completely original and was really fun from that perspective. But the book adaptation I'm doing is actually a lot of fun as well, because there's freedom in that too, assuming it's not 1984, like a great classic that everyone knows. You can have a room within that to create and adapt the world. The springboard in TV more often than not, there is something, an article or something that will have triggered an idea for someone. Yeah.

Charlie Sandlan ([42:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xcAJIshzpBCvBLdXbiVwjganyZD226YlDnuADjLPV6zTHGpron1a6KBmpAhVkJjjF5125us7E2iA1xjuYJ73uFVVTO0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2522.02)):

Do you miss acting?

Suzanne Heathcote ([42:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iMcdSwC8D713Mtf7oBqxMOj3w3LKSY97fK2PLDzSpemZ76gdGfsc80DI9Na9JrpYCUlWNwH3t5Cg9v2PrHu559dBAnM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2523.87)):

I really do miss acting, actually. I was just talking about this thing I've written and it's like, if it does get made. So the agent who originally found me as it were, Matthew, ICM still reps me, still my talent agent, and we have dinner or at the moment, Zoom chats, about every five or six months, and we have the same conversation and he'll say, "What can we do about the acting?" And he'd say, "You have two choices. No one knows you as an actor in this town. So you'll be starting from scratch. So we'll be prepping you for the under fives, all that, CSI Miami episodes and all those things. And you'll be going all over town and meeting the cast directors and slowly, slowly getting to know people and building a resume that way. It's going to take a few years. And then from that, maybe we can get you a series regular or something."

Suzanne Heathcote ([43:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lEJFxUDVtbGpNgfc7sdgOnQs0vHSLw8JrRuzeaQQvaVZYfT-gX2Yo8QYT9kM3PBz_1DjntZ-T3zf0xKhG4f2zwXUF4A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2584.63)):

And I said, "What's the other option?" And it's write yourself something. And I was like, option two, for me. Because I knew that to do option one, that's a full-time job. I got to be down the gym. I got to get my hair done. I got to be driving all over town. Those five loads, that's days prep for me, at least, so that I can go in and make myself stand out and give a take in that audition that stands out. And so that even if I'm not right for it, they'll remember me. I mean the whole shebang. There's no way I could do that and write. It's too much work. And he was right. We really need to build from zero in terms of my acting. So I said, no, I can't. It's too much of a compromise at the moment with where my writing career was at that moment. I've been saying I'm going to write a film for ages. A nice character part that comes in for a couple of scenes. Great. I wouldn't want to star in it and direct it and write it, it's too much for me.

Charlie Sandlan ([44:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DifWt_SjGxOH14_IAtY6_KaRRpylUkHOq-UAqbxWW9tyeZdV45JEzIEk4E9S3WhSCOzsnpX56Gu9WE-K2DCt8kQxgaU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2647.75)):

Do you ever sit in front of just a screen and go, "I just have no fucking clue where to go from here?"

Suzanne Heathcote ([44:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QHOQPNDBaLTEKQywnR_E0dpzxOZjQME6ZgfENF__37BY2CEmsraIQiWFXon99-Jc1X0uJS54ugH6AXFuVS4u4BUVoy8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2653.21)):

Oh, yeah. It's funny actually with the plays more so, because it can feel like a total blank canvas with the plays. TV, there are so many constraints, that the constraints I find help to actually ... You need constraints in some ways to help you figure out, well, if I can't do this, what can I do? And as I say, often, you're being approached with a book or a bit of IP, people are saying, can you read this? What do you think? Is there something in this that you'd be interested in working on? You're often given a germ of an idea. You can write what you like, but we were thinking dot, dot, dot. Maybe it could be about women in tech.

Suzanne Heathcote ([44:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U3SVRJROO0TU5Ohf1Tsc_FX5zFQPPTrgu3Kblfq-636jlEgVJ4JZ3unBGHTeSp9cAZsDvE0TV0__vPXPSp-7nd_YFWk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2695.84)):

And so you're often thrown a bit of a bone in that sense. Or you're taking on someone else's show. All my recent jobs up to this point I've been on other people's shows. So you're really serving the person who's created the show. But when I've had those moments of blank page block, it's been more around the playwriting, for sure.

Charlie Sandlan ([45:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YVj2PuHiLbRrnIiE5WGzHFVzu4K7GRm1gJVRvyNRVka43hN5x1xVLQnJmTQvASZn1JzwN5mTvYPgb1F0KuyhOBS0Kng&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2721.49)):

Did you sit in the audition room a lot? Did you see a lot of audition?

Suzanne Heathcote ([45:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HilTpojTmROIJ2ZKYBWKZ5BBiQ_xWm2By6ejZ8YJANL6lkYZEHLlbdY-jCK68PY550uqQeol1IRmKqd-UAd4lfk-CSY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2725.81)):

Yeah. I mean less so for Killing Eve just because of the schedule and the time. I'd watch the tapes, but I wasn't in the room. Fear the Walking Dead, I was very vocal about casting to the point where Dave Erickson, who was the show runner, who I love, he said, "You go." For my episodes he was like, "Go to the casting and sit in casting." And so I did, and it was so eye-opening. And for the smaller parts, I would sit there, and it's hours you're in there.

Charlie Sandlan ([46:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=eoD_lmmnH6MZi_2BHj5lr9vdhkAkXZzar5qPVrWfJMrGF4W8F5d3xaJGUN2ztSaYvYS-hLA5hQYLevpTU2eXXH4SzWU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2761.77)):

Are there any pointers or any advice you would give to actors about the audition process? What stands out to you?

Suzanne Heathcote ([46:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mnZ2Z6XQw8ct9H7w23TB_-zfJbov48e-K1zBTxRVbRXR-yOhNhrFkPZw1pZjL9L-N5pXr1uWvg40hFelTBWU2sY-NcE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2770.14)):

I always remember, Fear the Walking Dead, we were auditioning for this militia group. It's a zombie show. Okay. It was like five lines, they had to come in and I can't remember what they were, but it was about giving orders to this group. I was amazed actually. We star a lot of people, and every time I had to give the same note, which was, really remember the stakes in this scene. This is life or death, this moment, for these people. And that doesn't mean shouting by any stretch, but you're shitting yourself. I mean, you might die in a second time. What you say now might end up being your death, the command you give. And so I would probably say, the side you're given, because often you're asked to write sides if you're auditioning actors in a show.

Suzanne Heathcote ([47:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6GgsKnKZc3g3-3z_SAxvKca0NAk5KkKgTKWH0RBft5i-wvkx4qxfNrnBJSN1jTdLu9v-90NQTqL_ehva-_F8VXT4yPs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2831.79)):

You probably, or may not, if it's at the beginning of the season, have physically got the script. So they'll sometimes say to a writer in the room, "Can you just write five pages for this character that we can audition." If they're from the script or if they're pre-written simply for the audition, those sides have been provided for a specific reason. And it is to show that character in a specific way. You want to see that the person you're auditioning can embody the character. And you would have picked those sides or had them specifically written to do just that. It will never be a casual moment you're being given to recreate. There is nothing casual about what you're doing.

Suzanne Heathcote ([47:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wTMcyd5P7Yh7lQxN4Nm5WrF-Cf94LsAeUAY86wii7WjjJVCMYNUWAYggJvVf1Ly8sttoKe2bUBXM_8rNVF6prA9v_DA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2873.81)):

And so if you find yourself performing in a very conversation, and I mean emotionally casual and emotionally conversation. I'm not saying everything has to be level eight in terms of your speech. But if emotionally you're finding you're super casual and relaxed, unless the comedy of that moment is that it's a high pressure moment and your character is relaxed, unless that is specifically the comedy of it, you might need to rethink what is actually going on. That's what I would say.

Charlie Sandlan ([48:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XrcTR7iMQ0AYnORTPHp65qOH4wE8t47JWn2YHEjxxaIa_riewdsrSHDAh2svfCZDuyPRhMjla9u56z5DwJ94KQjg5Ek&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2903.96)):

Yeah. Most actors they think, especially if they're not trained, they just think, well, I just got to be myself and let me just talk. And it's about just being myself. And then they go in and it's awful.

Suzanne Heathcote ([48:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3-ZWWpf7olFooV5_UCM250cQ3IWg-urLxaom-GDSr1Jaa2nuhnipbSrLer5POeW4K8ZGAhxGZh_a3V8L_cyxLuwh3z4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2918.72)):

I mean, they thought I was an acting Nazi because I was so like ... And I was just like, you cannot cast this person. And also two things I said to one of the guys was, "You have to be in the room." Like if it were my show, I would have to be in the room. Matt Weiner, they said for Mad Men, it was the same casting directors, funnily enough. And they said he would redirect the actors for a three-line part, over and over and over again. And I understood that impulse because when it's a self-tape, you don't know how that actor can take redirection. They could be sitting there with their acting teacher and it could be take 93 that you're seeing. And so you go, "Oh, they're really good." And I was like, "Even if it's live on Zoom, you have to have a dialogue with them and redirect the actors so that you know, because you don't have time, so that they're going to be able to take direction."

Charlie Sandlan ([49:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FO8HeZ7kCMA_ESuPa3DAgnTTHXMnpLZ33g3PaKtuY5lfyk6qesW0aQAjYVAwedhDwz7efzyyGUgBht5Ht1UkiWbOby4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2970.22)):

If you can't take a note as an actor, you're not going to work. I don't care how good your auditions are.

Suzanne Heathcote ([49:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ga3uXsYwfseszt_odn6-ClJ8y7h5GML31TuxfjAKW5GxV8p8_UW5gWfF_YKi4RgGP-joUvtL67Pio-SPRQwE9U8-4e0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2970.66)):

In TV, forget it. Yeah. And I would always say, saying dialogue realistically is not acting. Just because you think it's coming out of your mouth in a realistic fashion, that's not acting. And it's amazing, particularly in LA, I hate to say it, the amount of actors who come in and just think, well, I just have to read this. If I just say the lines in a kind of realistic fashion, like conversational way, that's acting. It doesn't sound like I'm reading. You're like, well-

Charlie Sandlan ([50:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xOkqB5UuboVqr40uPMa6D_xY7ZdNCC6X8f-9If1_cIeStzjuT32zAtMUqlQYUSq-XxH4XuVixRonK_D9khypIDVP3hQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3007.34)):

Listen, you either can create behavior or you can't, at the end of the day. And listening is at the root of all of it. I mean, how long did it take you to realize into an audition, this person just doesn't have it?

Suzanne Heathcote ([50:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LNNldyJrtA_n53qjAFYKshocJwO8lyUWyJloqoisedCBiQ_09uVYaFYKhz_4rDoo6ciVfRjbYwZ4AxwPicT2VNSGM7o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3021.61)):

Normally before they've even opened their mouth. I hate to say it. Well, it depends. It depends. It's because the way you carry yourself says something. I mean, look, everyone's surprised. Someone might walk in and they may look really bashful and shy and suddenly they just ... And you're like, "Oh, they're actually just a very introverted person." And they really have the goods. You know pretty quick. Within them actually performing, acting, wow, I mean, five seconds.

Charlie Sandlan ([50:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HTq1al6ljag0vRnblJEoivgs6uMq0FSHVlWQBMGPnJYpyKZn2JgsfHEB9LViDMGBXAg263r4szcmBU-3NdYkFEd1tYI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3049.2)):

Totally right? Three or four moments. If you're not alive, if you've made no choices, if you've gotten-

Suzanne Heathcote ([50:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HL-tQj7MStP2GjeQETgdJbzVnM8-_0RtTJuyziEuQgP_x1YPR6O3bFRmp3lWl_cUgZ0TQuf6FUT9cOUlsSFXG65u_i8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3056.42)):

Before you even spoken, you've got to be in your world and you can see if someone just goes, "Are you ready?" And you go, "Yeah. Okay, great. Take your time." And they've not turned it on. You can see. But sitting the other side of it, it's hard. You know what I mean? I miss acting, I don't miss being an actor. It's a hard life. The auditions, the schlepping, it's a lot of preparation for what might not feel like a very big reward. So you get the five line part. Really? Do you really feel like you're acting in the depth of your soul? Of course, in that moment you're doing your best work, but yeah, it's a lot of work for that moment.

Charlie Sandlan ([51:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_aF_aQsSAlp1GNB930Meo46r4o2CIG7_skz-w-ulg7Kq3GKWm6C28jUtqVP9uP2CTfzlRVaq1hGwuOlMAzYwxnyHyo8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3110.42)):

And it's not really acting. I mean, it's not. I mean, like five lines, please just say the lines, move the story forward. Thank you very much. And we'll see you later. And it's hard because actors go 10 years curving under five, under five, day players, day players, and they think to themselves, am I ever going to fucking act?

Suzanne Heathcote ([52:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xSeGq6xi0YypwYt9VU3EsUg0TrwaHFfT-j3tTAhg1wPYbz7-RlTOu_zkW8ng_KC5BeBdXoTm3W6DK3c5sInZf6FI1Zk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3126.75)):

You might Bryan Cranston it. You might just be that jobbing actor and then in middle age, get that job. I mean, he'd obviously done a lot more than like under fives, but you might not. You of course have to believe you will. I think it's the only way to keep going. I do believe if you're talented and you work hard, something will yield. I do believe that, I really do, but you just don't know when it's going to be.

Charlie Sandlan ([52:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=eblTOV4piLSe5kUHfwpHULy7ZAdzuWFAff5myCn4i7UMCO5IH_eNZVW2kHLFpNWpchjamefBWF7jMND2uJBQMy7jAic&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3155.08)):

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