

## coverstory

# 'The Talk's' Amanda Kloots is 'Fit for Christmas'

BY JAY BOBBIN



Paul Greene and Amanda Kloots star in Sunday's new CBS movie "Fit for Christmas."

For Amanda Kloots, CBS is more than just "Talk" these days.

The co-host of the network's weekday program "The Talk" has a big creative hand in "Fit for Christmas," a new movie that airs there Sunday, Dec. 4. Also an executive producer and (with screenwriter Anna White) the co-creator of the story, Kloots revisits her earlier career by playing a fitness instructor who opposes the redevelopment of the local community center in Mistletoe, Mont. She ends up in a romance with the businessman (Hallmark Channel-movie veteran Paul Greene) who has designs on the property. "All My Children" alum Rebecca Budig also stars for director Jessica Harmon, who's an actress as well ("The 100," "iZombie").

"We went on hiatus (from 'The Talk') in August," Kloots explains, "and I pretty much flew a couple of days later off to Vancouver to shoot the film on my hiatus, finished the movie, came back and started Season 13 of 'The Talk.' No rest." Still, that was fine with Kloots, who was excited to see her idea literally come to life.

"I helped conceptualize the entire movie right up until we were filming," she reports, "and it was amazing. There was a day on set – I'll never forget it – when we were filming at the Mistletoe Inn, and it was so perfectly Christmas. And I looked around,

and I just I couldn't believe it was happening. I literally pinched myself, because I remembered being in my bed in July of 2020 thinking of this idea at 3:00 in the morning, and then having it come to life, it was just so beautiful. And it just felt like magic."

Greene worked with writer White previously (on last year's "Christmas CEO"), but he says, "What made this so different was working with Amanda in this way, knowing that this was her first experience in this way. It just had this crackling newness and possibility to it that was really unique. It was very in-the-moment, spontaneous and exciting.

"There was this chemistry and friendship between all of us actors, really," adds Greene, "and especially between Amanda and myself, like, from the first minute. We were just like long-lost friends, and that translated really quickly into a feeling of having each other's backs in the scenes and improvising."

Partially because of her opportunity with "Fit for Christmas," Kloots (who lost her Broadway-actor husband Nick Cordero to COVID-19 in 2020) reflects, "I can't believe what I'm doing right now, when I look at my life and how much has changed, especially in the last three years. I just am constantly blown away by the idea of how life can change so quickly, and how dreams can come true."

## In Focus

**"America's Test Kitchen: The Next Generation: Season 1"** (Prime Video — series premiere, Dec. 9)

Jeannie Mai Jenkins hosts this 10 episode competition series in which contestants undertake a series of challenges that test their culinary abilities and on-camera personality. The winner in the end, as determined by judges Dan Souza, Elle Simone Scott, Jack Bishop and Julia Collin Davison, receives the opportunity to write their own cookbook and a \$100,000 prize to fund the culinary business of their dreams.

**"Must Love Christmas"** (CBS — TV movie premiere, Dec. 11)

Renowned romance novelist Natalie (Liza LaPira), famous for her Christmas-themed books, finds

herself snowbound in the charming small town of Cranberry Falls. There, she unexpectedly becomes involved in a love triangle with her childhood crush Caleb (Nathan Witte) as well as Nick (Neal Bledsoe), a reporter determined to interview her to save his dying magazine in this 2022 TV movie premiere.

**"Kindred"** (Hulu — limited series premiere, Dec. 13)

Octavia E. Butler's novel served as the basis for this FX on Hulu original drama series about a young Black woman who embarks on her future in Los Angeles only to find herself pulled back and forth in time, emerging at a 19th century plantation to which her family is linked. Mallori Johnson stars as the central character, Dana James; Micah Stock, Ryan Kwanten and Gayle Rankin also star.



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