



# Original-Cin Chat: The Invisibles' Bruce Greenwood Ponders 'Surfing' Through Life

September · Bruce Greenwood, The actor at home, Andrew Currie's  
27, 2024 The Invisibles, Surfing as a metaphor for life, Invisibility as a  
metaphor for avoidance, Tim Blake Nelson, Captain  
Christopher Pike

By John Kirk

A playful series of piano chords heralds the appearance of Bruce Greenwood on my Zoom screen, and before too long, his smiling face greets me.

"How are you doing?" He asks.

I say I'm great. I'm actually not. My *Star Trek* brain is staggered as it processes the fact that I'm talking to Captain Christopher Pike (Greenwood's character in the J.J. Abrams' 2009 reboot of *Star Trek*). I'm in a state of fanboy worry, but Greenwood is cool; the enviable type of cool you wish you could muster when storms rage around you.

I tell him it's the room my wife hates, which elicits a laugh.

"Hey, then we're in the same sort of room," He answers.

It's Bruce's relaxed manner that brings me back to Earth. You can't help but like him. He's completely laid back, comfortable in a frayed blue t-shirt and surrounded by musical and historical items in his own sanctum sanctorum.



Bruce Greenwood plays Carl, the metaphysically-minded bartender in *The Invisibles*.

It's like he's channeling Carl.

Carl is the topic of our conversation. We're talking about his performance as Carl in Andrew Currie's *The Invisibles*. It's a surrealistic fantasy starring Tim Blake Nelson as a man who starts to literally fade away from



people like him, including their *de facto* leader and somewhat of a spiritual guide, Carl.

Carl tends bar in an abandoned bowling alley for the other "Invisibles," surfs in Malibu in winter and seems to know everything. Carl is cool, calm, collected and knows your favourite beverage instantly.

I asked Bruce what drew him to that character.

"You know, I met Tim (Blake Nelson) in a hotel lobby – we'd never met before – and we were both in town working on projects and said, 'Let's have dinner.' We had this great conversation for a couple of hours, and four years later, he calls me up and says that they were doing this movie and they'd love for me to come and play."

"I said yes, without reading the script. I was lucky it was really good!"

There's a special quality about Carl. He's like a cosmic traveller or guru who seems to know more about the strange dimension all of these people find themselves in. He's their shaman, in a way. In a way, Carl embodies that special quality about the place.

I asked Bruce what he thought about he liked best about the film.

"The idea that we're never far away from a dream or a fantasy or delusion that takes us to places that heal us or delay healing. It's a place where you can go in your

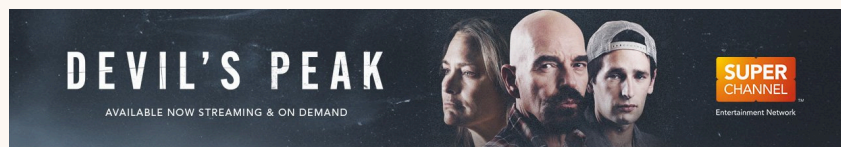


What about Carl?

“Essentially Carl was an easy fit. I’m no stranger to self-delusion,” he says with a laugh. “When you think about the myriad ways we talk ourselves into points of view or an emotional reality, yeah. That character had honed this ability to talk himself into a state of being that is at odds with the rest of the world, but didn’t make the world around him less real.”

Carl has the talk. He knows the drink of choice for all of his guests. When Tim Blake Nelson’s character, Charlie, walks into the bowling alley for the first time, not knowing anything about his own new state of being, he is immediately put at ease by Carl’s easy-going acceptance of this new reality. Carl has a surfer attitude in realizing that while they may not experience life to the fullest, they also suffer no pain. His perception convinces Charlie that he should be grateful for what he has instead of lamenting what he has lost.

How did Bruce construct this character? I asked him what influenced his portrayal of Carl.



“I don’t surf, but I was talking to a good friend of mine who surfs and he said that surfers are often tagged





This film is filled with moments – deeply human moments that makes the audience wonder about our capacity to overcome trauma.

Overcoming trauma comes with the ability to recognize change. It also requires those empathetic people who are in tune with themselves and who also have the capacity to provide insight to others.

*The Invisibles* is a powerfully moving film that has all of those elements. It's a film that speaks to the human condition of grief but it also shows us, that with the right people guiding our way, we can overcome that grief by moving forward.

I asked Bruce if he had a favourite moment in the film.



"Yeah. The scene in the bar where I tell Tim that I choose to believe, which speaks to the strength of his resistance to change. I don't know if I'm a person who resists change more than I like, so for me, that little snippet really stuck with me. It made me walk away wondering ... how aware I am of my own resistance to change?"

Carl is one of those characters who makes us wonder and clearly, Bruce Greenwood is one who wonders.

*The Invisibles* is in theatres now.