



"I'll never leave New York -- not for very long, anyway"

Actress Spotlight: Rachel Brosnahan of Woody Allen's 'Crisis in Six Scenes'

Rachel Brosnahan shares her experiences of working with Woody Allen, plus her favorite neighborhood in New York City and her new project with Daniel Craig

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Like many people, Rachel Brosnahan first got to know New York City by watching Woody Allen movies. "*Annie Hall* is one of my parents' favorite films," said Brosnahan, who grew up in Highland Park, Illinois, where she was one of the only students at her high school to join both the wrestling team and theater program. When she was 13, she saw *Manhattan*, followed by "many, many more" films from Allen's iconic career that are essentially love letters to his hometown. To Brosnahan, the city seemed like a beautiful, glamorous mecca that glittered with excitement and the transcendent tunes of George Gershwin.

"I had the most romantic notion of what New York would be like," Brosnahan said recently. "I always wanted to move here."



Rachel Brosnahan and John Magaro in 'Crisis in Six Scenes' (Credit: Amazon Studios)

She eventually did, to study drama at NYU. Since graduating in 2012, Brosnahan, whose aunt is Kate Spade, has been racking up credits and accolades. She appeared in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of *The Big Knife* as well as on television in the atomic bomb drama *Man(a)titan*. But Brosnahan, now 25, is perhaps best known for playing Rachel Posner on Netflix's *House of Cards*. (She was the Beltway call girl hired to bring down a Congressman.) It was supposed to be a one-episode part. Brosnahan parlayed it into a full season with a major storyline, earning an Emmy nomination in the process.

The rising star now has several projects on the way. Up next is Allen's first TV series, *Crisis in Six Scenes*, debuting September 30, 2016, on Amazon. The half-hour comedy centers on a group of sheltered suburbanites in the 1960s whose comfortable lives are upended by a young fugitive radical, said Brosnahan, who discussed her dream project and life in New York in a recent phone interview.

Details about *Crisis in Six Scenes* are as closely guarded as Donald J. Trump's tax returns. What can you tell us about Ellie, your character?

I'm afraid to say anything, but Ellie is engaged to Alan (a finance major played by John Magaro), who is staying with Woody and Elaine May's characters for the summer, and Ellie is a true conservative. She's well educated but with a fairly narrow worldview that comes from having grown up with like-minded people. I think that's the case for a lot of characters on this show. But then they all have their worldviews challenged with the entrance of Lennie (Miley Cyrus).

What was it like working on *Crisis*?

It was an exuberant set. Everybody was thrilled to be there and, for me, it was a dream come true to work with such a prolific filmmaker like Woody Allen (who wrote and directed the series) — and the fact that Woody is acting in it, too. Just being around him, watching him wear all those hats, was exciting. Woody was extraordinarily generous and genuinely concerned with everyone having a good time.



Rachel Brosnahan, Woody Allen, John Magaro and Joe Lewis attend the world premiere of 'Crisis in Six Scenes' at the Crosby Street Hotel on September 15, 2016, in New York City. (Photo: Kim/Getty Images)

I hear Woody tends to shun rehearsals. He likes his performances to have a sense of spontaneity. There's something lovely about that. He really trusts everyone he brings on board and works with many of the same people. They have a shorthand way of doing things. So, we would go through a scene, try it once or twice, and move on. The days were very short. We were all home by dinner. [laughs]

Do you still have an apartment here?

It's on the Upper West Side, although I'm about to move. I'm so sad because I love this apartment! It's an old duplex with a lot of character, real tiny. The upper floor, where I have my bedroom, has really high ceilings, which are so rare in New York, and a skylight. Somehow it feels like the most romantic version of New York City living. I adore it.

What do you like about living on the UWS?

It's quiet, it's never too crowded and there are so many great spots for coffee and food. There's this tiny vegetarian Indian restaurant around the corner from me that is delicious. I go there a lot. [laughs]

With your busy schedule, how much time do you get to spend in the city these days?

The last couple of years I've been working out of town a lot, but this year I got lucky and I was here, on and off, from January to June. It was amazing. In the fall, I'm actually doing *Othello* with Daniel Craig and David Oyelowo at the New York Theatre Workshop, so I'll be here at least until mid-January.

So, you plan to settle into that new apartment?

Yes, I will never leave New York — not for very long, anyway.