
“My Fair Lady—In Bed”

In this *Beach* exclusive, actress **Melissa Errico** bares her soul about baring it all on screen in Showtime’s *Billions*.

How do you prepare for a sex scene on TV? I might be the last actor you’d think to ask—if I’m associated with anything, it’s with far purer roles. I’ve played Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* on Broadway, and many other corseted stage roles. But when I got the script for episode three of Showtime’s *Billions*, I found an opening scene in which my character is described, essentially: “June, the sad widow from the pilot episode, is riding a distinguished book editor, sitting on top fully nude and making sure he has a great time. Her breasts are bouncing up and down as he screams, ‘More, more, make ’em bounce, baby!’” I inferred the performance required vigorous activity.

I took a breath: Okay, you want to work in television, right? Yes, I do. And I was lucky to be cast without an audition and to go straight to the table read, where I sat in awe of Damian Lewis, Paul Giamatti, Maggie Siff and other greats.

The subject of the series, I knew, was the world of high finance. Plenty of my friends—two of my very best friends, in fact—are married into the finance world: one husband is a hedge fund owner, and the other is in distress management, which I’ve come to understand as the business of taking apart



the pieces of a failing company. I know how poised and beautiful the wives are, and how much money is possible but hard to predict. I know the men as dynamic—and stressed. I know the women as liberated but still the wives, in the same way I am—someone is always the mother; someone has to know

where to buy the new ballet shoes or register for the hockey rentals; someone makes sure there are Christmas decorations.

Playing a 9/11 finance widow, I felt I was poised to be on the show and bounce as needed, especially once I realized the ambition beneath the bouncing. June, in the script,

wants a book deal, and she’s sleeping with the publisher so it can all happen. (The script also explains that June is an old flame of Axe, the Damien Lewis part, and had given him a blowjob at a Christmas party years ago, before he was married. Okay, *now* things are getting interesting for Eliza Doolittle.) I adjusted to all this. I readied myself for who June was, and to the underlying difficulty (agony, likely) of 10 years as a 9/11 widow, raising two kids on her own, relying on the scholarship money for college given by the firm.

I came to work one July day ready for my sex scene. I was fit and my skin was clear. I had exercised for weeks, even going to Tracey Anderson, the high intensity workout studio, after years of threatening to try it—and years of being afraid I would never get anywhere remotely near Gwyneth condition. (I still never got into the most popular class, which was somehow booked for the entire summer. Instead, I took the “other” classes—the weird bands class and the dance classes.)

I arrived on time for the shoot and went to the trailer for body makeup. I got my face on, and my arms, legs and lower body were air-brushed by a spray machine. Thank goodness it was summertime because it was