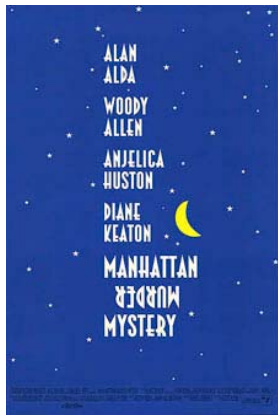




Presents

GlenVIEWINGS: Movies With A Motive *Manhattan Murder Mystery*

"I'll never say that life doesn't imitate art again" - Larry Lipton



Director:

Woody Allen

Producer:

Robert Greenhut

Writers:

Woody Allen

Marshall Brickman

Starring:

Woody Allen

Diane Keaton

Anjelica Huston

Alan Alda

Jerry Adler

Cinematography:

Carlo Di Palma

Editor:

Susan E. Morse

Distributor:

TriStar Pictures

Release date:

August 18, 1993

Running time:

104 minutes

Budget

US\$13.5 million

Box Office gross

\$ 11,285,588 (US)

Manhattan Murder Mystery is the 7th collaboration between Woody Allen and Diane Keaton, who had so memorably coupled in his greatest hit, *Annie Hall*. The pair again generate effortless chemistry. A mystery based on misunderstandings and clumsy amateur sleuthing, it is also an affectionate, charming, and realistic depiction of marriage and middle-age.

Production on the film commenced just as Woody Allen and Mia Farrow began their highly acrimonious break-up that would forever alter the public perception of the filmmaker. Critics of the film were seemingly more concerned with analyzing Allen's personal life rather than assessing the film's qualities. *Manhattan Murder Mystery* was categorized as a minor work compared to the rest of his oeuvre.

At the time, Allen himself was also disparaging, calling the film "an indulgence, a kind of pleasure." Recently, however, Allen reassessed the film, now claiming it to be "one of [his] best movies because everything in it works. The romance works, the danger works." His playful script shows that, with too little information and a lurid imagination, we can be easily drawn into making conclusions about a person. For those of you who viewed *Rear Window* in September, you will surely see the parallels.

This film is best enjoyed if viewed for what it is: a farcical comic gem that may not try to be anything but significantly entertaining, but is all the better for it. From the sheer suspense of *Rear Window*, to the political intrigue of *The Manchurian Candidate*, the *Movies with a Motive* series ends with the contemporary sophistication and humor of a classic whodunit, Woody Allen-style.

Did you know?

- As well as referencing Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* and *Vertigo*, the film also includes clips from two other famous cinematic mysteries: Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity*, and Orson Welles' *The Lady from Shanghai*.
- Diane Keaton's role was originally written for Mia Farrow, who had appeared in each of Allen's previous 13 films, but backed out after splitting up with Allen.
- Allen began work on the script in 1973, but put it aside for years because he felt it was a 'minor' work. Elements of the same script were also incorporated into *Annie Hall*.



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"I don't understand why you're not more fascinated with this! I mean, we could be living next door to a murderer, Larry." - Carol Lipton

"So, New York is a melting pot! Get used to it!" - Larry Lipton

Discussion Questions and Topics

Questions:

- How much does a star or director's personal life affect your enjoyment of a film?
- Why do you think Allen chose to shoot the film with handheld cameras? Does the style add or detract from your experience?
- Do you agree with the initial critical consensus and Allen's own opinion that the film is trivial? What significance, if any, is there to be found in the film, and in the mystery genre as whole?
- Why do you think that comedy and humor mix so well with the suspense and surprise of the mystery genre?
- How does the plot of *Manhattan Murder Mystery* compare against other films in the genre, such as *Rear Window*?

Topics

- Life imitating art
- Marriage
- Nosy-neighbors
- Humor
- Infidelity
- Jealousy



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"I think it's a reasonable assumption that if you're dead you don't suddenly turn up in the New York City Transit System." - Larry Lipton

Library Resources

1) *Conversations with Woody Allen : his films, the movies, and moviemaking.*

Eric Lax. The best and most up-to-date book on Allen available, covering over three decades of conversations between him and biographer Eric Lax.

Copy	Material	Location
791.43 ALLEN	Book	Nonfiction

2) *Woody Allen: A Life in Film.* Schickel, Richard. An in-depth analysis of Allen's career by *Time* film critic Schickel, deriving from a 2003 *TCM* documentary.

Copy	Material	Location
j791.4375 PER	1 Book	Youth Nonfiction

3) *The Unruly Life of Woody Allen: A Biography.* Marion Meade. An independent biography of Allen that draws on numerous sources who have known Allen, and is far from flattering in its review of his personal life.

Copy	Material	Location
B ALLEN,W. MEA	Book	Biography

4) *Woody Allen: A Biography.* John Baxter. A kinder look at Allen's life that lacks the wealth of sources of Meade's book, but still has some rich insights.

B ALLEN,W. BAX	Book	Biography
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5) *The Insanity Defense: The Complete Prose.* Woody Allen. A comprehensive collection of Allen's writings.

Copy	Material	Location
817.54 ALL	Book	Nonfiction

6) *Manhattan Murder Mystery* [videorecording (DVD)].
Just in case you want to see it again!

Copy	Material	Location
DVD MAN	1 DVD, Fiction	AudioVisual



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"What has gotten into you lately? Save a little craziness for menopause!" - Larry Lipton

Online Resources

http://www.script-o-rama.com/movie_scripts/m/manhattan-murder-mystery-script.html

The full dialogue script for the film

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107507/externalreviews>

Links to numerous reviews of the film from its original release

<http://torp.priv.no/woody/>

A fan-made website that lists brief insights into each of Allen's films, and includes audio clips and a full bibliography of titles on the director

<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/03/allen.html>

A 2003 essay that discusses the question "Is Woody Allen a misanthrope?"

http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Woody_Allen

Some of Woody Allen's most famous and funniest quotes

<http://www.ibras.dk/comedy/allen.htm>

Contains excerpts of some of Woody Allen's 1960's stand-up comedy routines

<http://www.woodyallenband.com/>

The official website of Woody Allen's jazz band. He stay plays every Monday night at The Carlyle in New York. The band also tours the world. Allen plays clarinet.

<http://www.woodyallen.com/misc/inside.html>

An archive of the comic strip "Inside Woody Allen", which ran from 1976-1984.

http://www.newyorker.com/humor/2008/11/10/081110sh_shouts_allen

A recent science-fiction short story by Allen, published in *The New Yorker*.