

Hollywood Unscripted Episode 36: Noomi Rapace (THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO): A Stuck at Home Special

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Jenny Curtis: Welcome to another special episode of Hollywood Unscripted, Stuck At Home. I'm Jenny Curtis and today I am virtually sitting down with the coolest actress, Noomi Rapace. She's well-known for originating the role of Lisbeth Salander and The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo and the rest of that series. She's been in Sherlock Holmes: Game of Shadows, Bright, What Happened to Monday, The Drop, and so many more. She's an actress with fierce strength and an open heart and today we get to cover her latest movie, The Secrets We Keep, along with the rest of her career. Noomi, thank you so much for joining me.

Noomi Rapace: Thank you for having me.

Jenny Curtis: You're currently in London, is that correct?

Noomi Rapace: That is correct. I'm in my house in London and been in quarantine for the last 14 days because I've been traveling this summer and then I came back and I've been stuck in my house, watching a lot of films. It's a strange time but also gives me time to catch up on things.

Jenny Curtis: It's definitely a shorter quarantine than some of us who have been stuck in our homes for like three months at this point.

Noomi Rapace: Oh my God, I know. I have a lot of friends in L.A. Normally I go there a couple of times a year and I stay for a month or six weeks and I miss my friends so much. It just feels very unreal and it feels like you guys have had it way tougher than we. It's been quite hard and it kind of feels like you're living in a movie.

Jenny Curtis: Yeah, that's a good way of putting it, living in a movie. It feels very unreal. But we're all healthy here and I'm glad that you're healthy and you've gotten to travel. How have you been traveling? How do you stay safe? What have you been doing?

Noomi Rapace: I went to Sweden for work. Sweden and Denmark for meetings, and I'm producing a couple projects, so I went to work with my partners. Then I went to my friend's birthday in Spain. In Europe, some countries are open. There's rules, obviously, but it's very different. In some countries there's less rules, like in Sweden, people are not wearing any masks and people social distance and all that, but it's way more

relaxed. I mean, now we're kind of slowly going back to normal in London, which feels good. My son is back in school and I'm prepping for a film.

Jenny Curtis: Talking about producing, I'd love to jump in immediately with *The Secrets We Keep*, which is coming out this week, September 16th, in theaters and then will be on VOD in October. You are an EP on the film as well as the lead. I just would love to hear about the genesis of this project and yeah, take us from the beginning.

Noomi Rapace: Yeah, wow. So I was given this script way back, maybe three, four years ago, and it actually came to me and Joel because we were looking for something to do together. Then I read it and I called Joel. I was like, "Dude, there's something in here. There's a heartbeat. There's a core. There's a story that needs to be told." Then I came on board as a producer and then we started this journey to find a director. So I met with different directors and when I met Yuval, that was when it kind of all just fell into place. I always knew the script needed work, because I wanted to explore something less known and kind of change my character into something that was... Originally she was not of Roma descent, so I kind of wanted to shine light on a problem and on a situation that people knew less about.

When I met Yuval, he had the same perspective, so we just clicked straightaway and I called the other producers and the financiers, and everyone was like, "We have our director." I was shooting Jack Ryan in New York, so I went to Yuval's house early mornings and late nights and we were just sitting and working on the story together. It was very much our collaboration and us kind of diving into this world and doing research and finding Maja's story, my character's story, but also getting to learn the world back then and what was going on. And it was our goal to use real events and I kind of get inspired by things that really happened and work that into our story. So it became really personal for me and I am very proud of the film.

Jenny Curtis: Yeah, it's a beautiful film.

Noomi Rapace: Thank you. And you know what's funny, Jenny? Now as a producer I can say that I'm proud of the film because I find it really problematic watching myself. I'm not a big fan of me.

Jenny Curtis: Are you kidding?

Noomi Rapace: But as a producer it's like the whole film is my baby. So I love Chris Messina's performance and Joe's performance and Amy's performance. I can watch them over and over. Stepping into the producer chair, I can see the project with new eyes. I've always had this blurred vision when I talk about my own films because it's like, "Oh yeah, my performance and me, me, me," and I find that a bit problematic. But now I'm like, yeah, no, I'm proud of the film from the producer's perspective.

Jenny Curtis: Is this your first time producing?

Noomi Rapace: No, it's not, but it's the first time I was so hands on. And I was sitting with, in weekends and when we would shoot, we shot in New Orleans. I was sitting late nights with the other producer and Yuval and working on the script and working on the production schedule and into small details. So I was very hands on and it was incredible. Very hard but very, very fun. So it's the first time I was that involved, but I've been executive producer before.

Jenny Curtis: Was it a struggle to kind of take off your producer hat and put on your actor hat, or did they kind of blend together?

Noomi Rapace: You know, it's interesting that you ask because I've always been scared of going between the looking at a story and a character and being inside it. And I go really deep into my characters. So I think I had this fear before that's like, "Oh yeah, I can't do both." I've been asked to direct films and I was like, "Can't do that. I need to stay in it. I need to be on the inside." Funny enough, it was less hard than I thought, because the responsibility as a producer is very different from when I'm an actress. Because I always need to find the truth, the character's own personal navigation system, like what is her perspective on things? What is her back story? Who is she? What is she like? What's her fears? What is her dreams? If I have filled up myself, my whole tool box of the character's colors, basically, then I have it.

It was kind of interesting to discover that I could just open that box. It was almost like a visual thing. I'm interesting almost Narnia. When you walk in, you open the door and you step into this universe, and then I close the door to the producer. And then I remember one day when Yuval came to me and he was asking something and I was like, "No, no, no, no. I can't do that now. I need to stay on this side." Because then it became split personality for a second. I was like, "No, I can talk about that in the end of the day." It was very, very interesting. I felt so connected with Maja. She kind of came to me quite natural, I would say.

Jenny Curtis: I saw an interview that you did a couple of years ago where you kind of said you take your characters home with you and when you're playing them they really affect your life.

Noomi Rapace: They do.

Jenny Curtis: Was it different on this one then, because you were able to step out and be a producer, or did Maja affect you in some ways?

Noomi Rapace: I think she affected me even more because some days I was totally, I felt like I was drowning. It was like I was pulled down in this emotional roller coaster and I was doing ice bath. I (inaudible), that you met him, my assistant. She was like filling up. She was like getting those big, big buckets and like big 10 kilos bags of ice

and filled up my bathtub. And I was like in ice for three minute. It's like cooling down my system and my nightmares, I had a lot of nightmares that was very much Maja's universe. And what happened to her when she was young and broken memories and I totally felt that she took over, but what was interesting, I managed to be less emotional about it when I left set. She was there, but I could have basically put her to sleep. I was like, "Okay, you rest now I need to step in and sort some stuff."

Jenny Curtis: Have there been other roles that you couldn't do that so much?

Noomi Rapace: Oh yeah. The normal me would be that the character is very much alive in me constantly. But I was doing research for a film once and I met this woman who had multiple personality disorder and she said, "There's many versions of me. They're always here. I see all these figures and demons and creatures behind you normally when I'm talking to you, but I choose to ignore them. And then I will have a conversation with them when we're done Noomi." And I was like, "Okay." That's how it normally is for me. My character's always in me and I go home or normally I'm away somewhere, but I don't really socialize as much when I'm working. I go into my own universe and I kind of go to the gym in the end of the day and I go to bed. I don't do dinners.

I try to stay in it but it also depends on the character. Some characters kind of needs more and are more greedy with my time and my heart. The Girl with a Dragon Tattoo is maybe one of the most extreme ones, but it was such a long shoot. We did three films back to back and it was like six months of preparation. So is I think a year and a half when she was living in me. And she very much took over my soul and my body and my... so I transformed my look, became her. I was blending in with her more and more. I remember some of my friends and my son said to me, at some point, he's like, "I don't know who you are." I was like, and I could feel like, "Oh, I'm on the edge now, do I need to pull myself back?"

It's been moments when I feel like I'm almost tipping over, but I never did. I always managed to find a balance where it's like, okay, I know where the edge is. I know that I could maybe get lost, but I also know how to bring myself back. And that's something I'm constantly working on, pulling myself back into, here's the safe spot. It's almost like a safe word that brings me back to sanity. But sometimes maybe I think it's sanity. It's not (inaudible) some films, I don't realize how crazy I was until I'm done. And then I was like, "Oh, I was quite far gone."

Jenny Curtis: So for The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo for Lizbeth, was it because of what the character demanded or was it really the length of having to work on three projects back to back?

Noomi Rapace: I would say it was combination maybe. And she was also very cried, broken inside and very much a loner. So I didn't interact with people and I kind of felt like I went deeper and deeper into my own universe. And the less contact you have

with people, the less you share what's going on. And the more you will start answering yourself, it's almost like you have conversations with yourself rather than involving others. When I did the Seven Sisters, What Happened to Monday, when I played seven total different characters, they took a grip on me and it was like, they almost hijacked me. It felt like I was having a full blown relationship with those seven sisters. And I just couldn't interact with people outside of my own bubble. I remember once when one of the sisters died, we did a scene and I lost one of the sisters.

And I was talking to my real sister was in London. We were talking the end of the day. And she was like, "Is she dead? Did she die today?" And I just started crying. I like, yeah, she's gone. And my sister who was home in my house, she was like sharing the pain with me. It was this strange. So the only person I could really talk to was my real sister. And maybe because I was so much in the sisterhood and what is it to have sisters, the hate, the love, the competitive side. And then it's like still, when it comes to someone from the outside attacking and it was like, "I can fight with my sister. I can hit my sister but you can't." I'm going to defend her. I'm going to die for her. Honestly, I want to kill her. You know what I mean? So it's been different on every journey sort of.

Jenny Curtis: Just to jump ahead to that because I really did want to ask you about it because that struck me. I just watched What Happened to Monday and the scene where you're literally mourning over her body. And it is your body. What is the process in playing against yourself? Because I know it's been done, like it's not uncommon for people to maybe play their own twin, but playing septuplets, you were really your entire support (inaudible).

Noomi Rapace: It was the one man, the seven woman show. It was when the director, Tommy called me, he wanted me to do a couple of films before that with him but I couldn't because I was stuck in the project and whatever. So we've been trying to find something and then he called me and he was like, "Yo Nooms, I have something. It's a crazy story. It's seven brothers, but I can only see you do this. So if you want to come on board, we will change it into seven sisters." So I was like, "Okay, send me the script." I read the script the same night and I called him the next day. And I was like, "Man, I'm in, let's bring them to life." So when we were working on the script and change it into from seven brothers to seven sisters, I kind of felt like I had to revisit myself in different chapters of my life.

Like when I was 15, one of them is more like Noomi as a 15 year old. One is Noomi as a 18 year old. One is Noomi at 24. So it felt like they were all different versions of me. So when I lost, when one of them died, it was like, I was saying goodbye to certain chapter of myself and my life, which became very personal in a way that I couldn't predict before I was in this situation because it was so I was like playing my way through the scenes. Some scenes two days to do because maybe I started on the floor dying and then in the end of the day I am crying my eyes out, holding a standing

girl, a body and feeling that my heart breaks because I died and I lost my sister, but it's also, I lost myself.

But the way I could always use it, like siblings and twins even more are almost connected in a way that is so powerful. So Jenny, I felt like I didn't need anyone else and it scared me. But not because I was enjoying the time on my own. I was like, "Oh, this is my show. Look at me. I don't really have that in me. I love acting because it's connection. I love to connect." If this was not an interview about me, I would love to ask you questions and hear about you and like, where did you grow up? Like, why are you sitting there and interviewing me? Like where did your curiosity into people come from? I love people that I love to connect. I'm so curious. And I'm like obsessed with understanding stuff. So for me, like acting is all about connecting.

Then when I said yes to What Happened to Monday, I was terrified that I wouldn't have any, the only way, my only method in acting is connection and truth. And how can you connect with yourself if you're, I'm just here, there's no one else here. So like having a green room with marks and tennis balls and crosses and everything is going to be happening in CGI (inaudible). It's like, "How am I even going to function? Like, where's the truth?" Strangely enough, they all just came to life. It was almost like I did a recording in my head of the... I played Saturday and then I switched to Friday and then I could almost see myself and hear myself. I mean, we did record my lines. I was listening to my own lines and answering myself, but it was like, I could see my face and I could talk to myself. So it was like an inner cinema that was going on a full on relationship drama, going on in me.

Jenny Curtis: So they weren't always standards then sometimes you were just talking to nothing.

Noomi Rapace: No sometimes, (crosstalk), yeah. We kind of used all different techniques.

Jenny Curtis: Wow. Talking about the connection that you just mentioned. I actually did an interview on somebody else's podcast yesterday and he was talking to me about how actors are fearless. I like to consider myself a little bit of an actor, but like, that's not how I feel because I think it's all about connection. And to me, fearlessness is not part of the equation.

Noomi Rapace: I agree, but you know it's funny, I'm so scared of things. I'm terrified, but I need to confront my fears and I need to step into those rooms. Like if I feel like, "Oh, this is too scary." Like, I don't know. I can't, this paralyzes me. Then it almost becomes like this thing that I have to do. And I was like, "Why am I so scared? What is so dangerous? Like what's on the other side." Then it almost becomes this need to not be asleep under my own fear. So it's like, I have so much fear. I can be maybe not shy, but like I always felt like such an outsider when I grew up. And I always felt like I don't belong in this world. I don't fit in. I'm a weirdo. I'm not like the other girls. I'm

not like the boys, but I want to have with the boys. But I am a girl that was like, it's kind of stuck between.

And I was like, where's this space for me? And then I started watching films when I was like 13, maybe out, I live on this remote farm and films became my oxygen, my soul oxygen and I felt connected. And then my fears and my loneliness and my pain and my personal struggles, there was like a space for them. I felt like I can fly. I can be. I live in those stories that are stories being told, there's actors out there, directors bringing characters to life that are like me. And then I didn't feel alone. So that's the connection happened from my little room on this farm with people probably in LA or in New York or in London creating stuff and how that's changed me and made it possible for me to become a better version of myself.

Jenny Curtis: So when you were watching those films, did you know I'm going to be an actor? That's what I'm going to be.

Noomi Rapace: Yeah. So I grew up between Sweden and Iceland. I remember I was in my first film, like smallest part when I was seven and I was on set for three weeks. But like, if you really look for microscope, you see like, oh yeah, that little girl. But for me it was major, it changed my life. So I was on set for three weeks and the director was a crazy Icelandic, very loud man. And people were a bit scared of it, but I remember just feeling very included. I remember one day we've been working 14 hours, 15 hours without breaks. And everyone was tired. Like people like, "Oh, we need a break." Or I think they wanted to wrap up the day and he just lost it. And he was like, "What is wrong with you? You're not real artist, dah, dah, dah."

I was sitting next to him, just like quiet and like didn't dare to look at him. And he was like, "How old are you?" I was like seven. He's like, "She's a real actress. She doesn't complain. Look at her." And I was like, "Okay, this is what I got." I think from that moment, like he planted a seed in me and I was like, this is where I want to be. And then we moved back to Sweden and I was like 11, 12, 13 and I had my tales in me and that dream was very far away. But then when I was 15, I just brought myself together and I was like forced myself to make a decision. So I left my family and I moved to Stockholm, which was eight hours away. It's a long drive and I went to a drama high school drama college. So that's when I reconnected with the dream that started when I was seven.

Jenny Curtis: Now, leaving home that young, was it like, I'm leaving you to go to school and I'm going to go to this high school or college or were you leaving home and then you found your way to school?

Noomi Rapace: No, I knew where I was going. I've always had this very strong... I'm very stubborn. And I told my family, it's like, "I'm leaving. I'm going to go to this school." It was like, I had to audition to the school, like there was like three really hard auditions and I was like managed to get in. And I just said to them, "I'm moving and I'm

leaving." They didn't stop me and they let me go. Which, I mean, my son is 17 now and I would never let him go. I can't understand how you can let your 15 year old daughter move. But I was very determined and very, I kind of knew that I had to do it. I felt like things were not good and I wouldn't have turned into a human that I wanted to be if I would've stayed. So it was necessary and I became sober, I left.

And I came to this new city. I've never been in a big city. I was like a farm girl. I was a good drinker and I know how to build things and I could ride horses. I was good with everything that was creating and building and painting and farm work. That was my skills. But like, I've never been in an escalator when I was like 15, I could hardly write and read because I went to alternative school. So I came like this. I don't know if he ever saw this film with Jodie foster called Mill.

Jenny Curtis: I did a long time ago. Yeah.

Noomi Rapace: I felt like now I came to the big city. I'm like, oh, I'm like, this is wild kid that doesn't know how to behave. So I was basically quiet for a couple of years just studying human behavior. It's like, this is how the sophisticated, people with knowledge, that's how they move in the world. I was studying how people did things.

Jenny Curtis: Which is part of being an actor is studying other humans. So when you were at school, were you studying a specific technique or anything? Or how did they train you?

Noomi Rapace: I would say that it was a cocktail of different things. And then the last year I started working when I was 16, I got a part in a TV show. So I started filming when I was 16 and I did 12 episodes of the biggest show in Sweden back then. It was-

Jenny Curtis: Oh wow.

Noomi Rapace: ... really bad but everyone saw it. And I was like, I remember I saw one episode and I was like, "Oh my days, this is so bad. I can't see this." I was like 16. I was like this, no, no, no. And then I started doing theater. So I started working. I was just working, working, working and I think I created my own method and it always brought me back to truth. So what I try to do, I'm obsessed with real stories. And I was actually talking to David Ayer, who directed me in Bright. We were like texting the other night and we're talking about art. And for me, art is freedom and arts and films is universe of total freedom because there's no right and wrong. There's no good and bad. You have, you can be anything and everything. The only thing you need to know is honesty somehow and that I can do. It's not about looking a certain way.

It's not about vanity. It's not about being cute. It's not about being smart. It's about knowing and having a navigation in yourself. It's like, okay, this is where it's truthful. This is where the character is in line with everything. And it's not about putting on a

show for me. It's not about faking stuff. It's about feeling it and living from the inside and like relating to it rather than like putting on things.

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Audio: Currently 21 years old and today I'm going to read a poem for (crosstalk) .
I felt like a magic extended from her fingertips down to the base of my (crosstalk) .
You have to take care of yourself because the world needs you and your voice.
Trust me, we do go to (inaudible) asked about me, was ready to spit on my dream.
Her fingers were facing you (inaudible) .
Do you feel like your purpose and your worth is really being questioned.
(inaudible) stop me from playing the piano.
She buys walkie talkies wonders to whom she should give the second device.
Cats don't love humans. We never did. We never will. We just find (crosstalk) .
The beauty of rock climbing is that you can only focus on what's right in front of you.
And so our American life begins.

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Jenny Curtis: So with Bright, your character was scary. She was great.

Noomi Rapace: Yeah, I love her.

Jenny Curtis: I think they should have put you in way more of the film. I wanted all of your story.

Noomi Rapace: Well, thank you. I loved her. She was such amazing villain with a broken heart. She was bleeding inside and all that blood turned black and she was like, " Oh, I'm going to destroy you."

Jenny Curtis: That kind of metaphor. Is that how you connect to your characters? You kind of see visually, like this is the description and that's how I'm getting in. That's my pathway into this character.

Noomi Rapace: It's different every time I would say. When I did The Drop with Tom Hardy, I went to Queens and Brooklyn and I went to rescue dog centers. And I was just there like cleaning dog shit and just listening to how the people around me were talking. I was like slowly, she came to me. I didn't, because there was nothing to study. There was not really research to do. I spoke to Dennis Lehane who created her and who was the writer who was incredible, who I adore. I spoke to the director and slowly she came to me, but I didn't feel like I needed to go out and catch her. I was like, I'm going to trust the process. I knew what she came from. I decided what kind of upbringing she had and like her dad and what happened to her.

And then I knew that she had been in a bad relationship with my Mateus (inaudible) character. And like when I kind of filled myself with all her, almost like a photo album of her past, her movements and the way she dressed and she was wearing this really sticky, sweet perfume that Noomi, that me I hate it, but it just made so much sense. So it kind of felt like I just like slid into becoming her. And then she more about her than I did. There was a scene that was not in the script that I was like begging the director to shoot. I was like, "We need to have this moment where we see her alone with her ex boyfriend to understand the relationship they have before they go off to the bar with Tom Hardy works. We need to see how he controls her and how she's trapped in this dysfunctional but still a love relationship.

And it was like, that would be the last puzzle piece we need to understand fully who she is because she will never tell anyone, but we will see how her body just like react to him being in the room. So I always had this like strong sense of like same when I did Prometheus. I read the script and straight away fell in love with Elizabeth Shaw and I had like several conversations with Ridley. And then I was like I think there's two missing beats, small little glue scenes, but I feel like we need to just tell the story about her a little bit more, just to make her human and to show a bit of her vulnerability and her fears because she has a strong mind, but her body is breaking. So the conflict between mind and body. So I've always had the sense and I guess that is almost a producer hat again, and to see the arc of the characters, not just from the character's perspective, like in the storyline, in the curve and the wave of the story, what does the audience need to see to be able to relate to her?

Jenny Curtis: Well, and it's also like on a set, everybody's doing their job and they're doing the best they can, but it's sort of the actor's job to go to bat for their character because sometimes it's not someone else's focus. Can we hear more about times you've gone to bat for your characters?

Noomi Rapace: Oh my God. Every time. And it's always like, I don't want to be pretty. I want to be real. I think it was Joel Kinnaman who said to me at one point he was like, "I guess it's not a Noomi character if you don't look like shit in the end. I was like, mm-hmm (affirmative), one day, Jenny, I'm going to look flawless and be beautiful. I mean clueless or something. But like since day one I did theater for 10 years, that was my school. And I always felt like, why do we women and girls need to be pretty and likable and sweet and adorable and approachable? Why can't we just be fully humans with all our flaws and all our brokenness and anger and aggression and whatever it is. All the colors needs to be allowed to come out.

That's something I've been defending and arguing in a lot of rooms since I was like 19, when people (inaudible) like, who is she? What is she doing here? I was like, (inaudible) like knocking on the door to the producers. And the director is like, I have an idea. And I was like, wait, what? We didn't invite you. I was like, no, but it's a really good idea.

Jenny Curtis: Is it true you refuse to go on magazine covers as Lizbeth because she was wouldn't have done that?

Noomi Rapace: Yeah. I said no to so many things. I was like because I kind of stepped into Lizbeth shoes and I was like, she would never do this. And I remember that I got awarded as the sexiest woman, dah, dah, dah for GQ magazine. I don't remember what it was and they wanted me to come and take the award. And I was like, "No, I can't. She would be very upset. She wouldn't do that. This is against everything she believed in. She didn't want to be labeled. She didn't want to be judged that someone would like look at her as a sexual creature that would be put into a box, we rate you highly as a sexual creature. She would be like, you know what? Yeah, it sounds like can't do it." That my loyalty to her was stronger than everything else.

And then I remember they wanted me to do, obviously the production, wanted me to do a lot of press and do covers and I was like, you can't do it. And they were like what? And there was like one magazine that I wanted to do. And it was like a men's magazine that only did men on the cover. And I was like, yeah, but I can sit in the suits. I could just like be me in a suit. And they're like, "No, we don't want you." And now funny enough, that magazine just reached out to my team recently and was like, we want her on the cover now. I was like, "Okay, can I be a man on the cover?"

Jenny Curtis: What did they say? Did they say yeah.

Noomi Rapace: They said yes, no. Yeah. I mean, I think it will do it for when I'm promoting a film that way makes sense.

Jenny Curtis: Yeah. So going back to The Secrets We Keep because you brought up how Joel Kinnaman and you were looking for a project together. So he was in it from the start. How did you find Chris Messina? How did he come on board?

Noomi Rapace: Oh, Chris, I went to the premiere of sharp objects in LA. I was invited by someone. I don't remember someone that was working on the show. I'm a big fan of Amy Adams, so I was like really looking forward to see her, bring this character to life. And then I discovered Chris and I was like, "Who is this man? He's amazing. And he's so full of life. And he has this desperation and strength and vulnerability at the same time." And I was like, "Wow." And it's really hard to play those cop roles. I remember that he brought that character to life in the most beautiful way. And then I had him in mind, I was like, I want to find something to do with him. So when Yuval started the casting process and he was on one of the lists I was like, yes, yes, he's amazing.

And then we were like, he was shooting some crazy project up in Canada and then we were face timing. Yuval was basically sitting like this and I was like, looking at Chris, like it's like obsessed with him. Like he was like, Oh, she's a bit too much. And then me and Yuval came off the call. I was like, "He's amazing. It feels like I'm married to him." I

could feel the connection even though he's in Canada, I'm sitting in New York from day one and I loved every moment with him every second. And same with Amy. She's so amazing. She's such an incredible actress and a director. So when she came on board and we were discussing the scenes and she was moving so easily between... I mean, she's not a producer on the film, but she was a producer like she embraces the story.

She was talking about like, "Oh yeah, if I say this in this scene, that will help you guys later on." And I was like, I was just sitting like in awe and like admiring her. I was like, "I'm going to be like you." So he was truly, I feel like everyone involved really went into it with great passion. It was very much a collaborative process. And obviously that is Yuval's way. He's Israeli. So very straight to the point. He never sugar coats anything. You know what he feels on things. Sometimes it's like we were clashing like this. And I was like, "No," he was like, "Yes, (inaudible)." Who is the strongest? And I was like, I'm half Spanish. I will never surrender and then it's like, in the end of it, I was like, okay. So it was a hard shoot. It was really hard, but he had so much fun at the same time.

Jenny Curtis: What were some of the challenges you had on set?

Noomi Rapace: We had a six week shoot and there was a period drama. So it was quite long days. I think it was in every day and it was like really long emotionally every day felt like a week. And then just finding the balance and carrying it all in our bodies. Basically the story is that I'm a housewife in the 50s, in a sleepy, beautiful small town in Louisiana. And I'm married to a doctor. I'm working with him at the office at the doctor's office. We have the beautiful son. My life is pretty good, even though I shut down things in myself. So I have on dealt inner scars that are there, but repressing them and dealing with them as much as I can. And then one day I see this man and I'm convinced that he is someone that did horrible things to me and to my sister 15 years ago. And she gets obsessed with him basically.

Then she starts following him and she follows him home to his house and she realizes that he has a family and kids and she gets like drawn into his world and she can't let it go. And things are starting to flush up in her and like almost like pieces that you can't really put together. So she doesn't understand what's happening first. And then she gets more and more convinced that she needs him to help her understand what happened. And he is the voice. He's the answer to what happened. And then she kidnaps him, puts him in the basement and forces her husband to come in on it. And she has her son upstairs. So she starts living this double life. And what I find so intriguing and fascinated with this whole story is that it really deals with the biggest issues and the biggest questions in life, forgiveness, revenge.

Avenging, if you strike back on someone who did something wrong to you, and if you break that person equally, would you heal yourself? Can you come out the other side? And then she thinks she's in control. She thinks that she just needs those answers. She thinks that she wants to hurt him and then she realizes that she just needs to know

what happened. She just wants him to admit that he did it and he just keeps denying. And he keeps saying, "It's not me. You've mistaken me for somebody else." And my husband doubts me and everyone doubts me now. I felt as Noomi that I'm going insane. I'm losing myself and I'm slowly it felt like I was in the swamp outside of New Orleans and like just slowly losing oxygen.

It felt like I was like breathing through a straw. Some days I was just holding Yuval. It's like, okay. And he was like go in, like one more take. And I was like, okay (inaudible) is my rock and he was with me on set and my beautiful assistant. Some days, I was just like, "I don't know if I can do it." She's like, "You can do it." I allowed myself to go to a place where I didn't really feel safe. I felt so safe with my director and my co-stars. So I could allow myself to take the risk in me to set myself free and to really touch the edge, to throw myself into her former. And I felt like she was like a shattered mirror. And then she was like, almost like you remember that film Memento, Guy Pearce that I love.

I kind of felt like I was living in Memento, because I had all these reflections of my past and all of myself and I was running, but then I was also sitting right there, but then I was lying down. I couldn't put the pieces together and that kind of happened in me and in my dreams. So that made the shoot very intensive and very hard, but also I knew from the get go that that was the place I had to go to.

Jenny Curtis: So besides ice baths, how do you take care of yourself in that kind of situation?

Noomi Rapace: Well, I work out once or twice a day. I'm very strict with my diet when I'm working. So I don't want to go on a sugar rush rollercoaster because it just messes up my whole system. I'm very disciplined. I don't drink alcohol. I don't go out. I can't really put myself in situations where I feel like I add adrenaline to myself. It's strange, my own discipline and my own mind is probably my strongest tool. So I always stick, I almost build up like walls that I could bounce back on. So in the end of the day, I go to the gym, no matter what, and I will sweat out the character. I will take a bath, Epsom salt and ice bath, I go between them. And then I go to bed and I listen to music before or after in the mornings and in the evenings.

And I try to not interact in too many other things. I can't watch movies. I can't talk to people really. I try to just stay as protected as possible from the outside world, so I have time to heal and to process and reset my mind and my body for the next day. But I also feel like for every day it's like (inaudible) and it's almost like I'm in the end, I'm always rolling.

Jenny Curtis: You do your own stunts as well. Don't you?

Noomi Rapace: Yeah. Most of them as much as they allow me to do. In What Happened to Monday, I did most of them, but like, I mean, obviously it seems when I'm fighting myself. So we had an amazing stunt double that played me fighting me. I was fighting her as we were switching characters, but there was one day when I was doing Wednesday jumps from a window down in a dumpster, that's like four stories up or something. And they were like, that's no way you can do that. And my stunt double did an amazing job that day, but she also so bruised. It doesn't matter how good you are. You always get a bit bruised up.

Jenny Curtis: Oh yeah.

Noomi Rapace: My nose broke on a job. My toe broke. I broke a rib, pull muscles. My body is basically a map of scars and all the inches, you can see here and then it's a bit wide over here. (inaudible) .

Jenny Curtis: So then in that case, like when you're taking care of yourself and going to the gym, are you doing a full day of stunt sometimes and then going and working out or can you take a break after that?

Noomi Rapace: I would adjust my workout then, and maybe do more of a stretching pilates program. I try to be kind to myself nowadays. I was harder on myself when I was younger, but also it comes down to the people you have around you. I have an amazing team around me that truly helps me heal and stay on the right side of sanity, insanity. And then sometimes I can't talk like it becomes overwhelming and then they will stir me a little bit into the right direction. It's like, "Okay, here's your food, here's your coffee, sit down. I'm going to tell everyone that you need a moment." And then I'm like, okay.

Jenny Curtis: Oh man, I know we're running out of time. I have so much I want to talk to you about.

Noomi Rapace: I love talking to you. I was talking to my friend, you know Barry Kewan is amazing actor. I'm so bad with pronouncing his last name. He's Irish. He was in a Killing of a Sacred Deer. Did you see that one?

Jenny Curtis: Yeah.

Noomi Rapace: One of my favorite films. He's an amazing actor. You would totally recognize his face. Anyways, we were talking before we started this interview. I was like, "Interviews can be really hard because sometimes the questions are like not so fun." And then I was like, "I'm going to see how this one goes." And now I'm really happy. I'm going to report back to him and say, "She's amazing."

Jenny Curtis: That means so much to me.

Noomi Rapace: Because you really want to go into the questions, which I appreciate and prefer.

Jenny Curtis: My final question that I've fallen in love with wrapping up all my interviews this way is what does it mean to you to have a life in storytelling?

Noomi Rapace: Wow. Everything. We live in a world now that is so mad and so crazy. And most days it gives me heartache because I look around and I'm like, "How can we still be dealing with those issues? How is it even possible? How come we haven't gotten further?" And then I'm like, "Okay, but I have this power. I have a superpower because I can decide what movies I bring to life. I can decide what I want to send out there. I will put my mark on his face by my choices. And I can be a part of a narrative that is not from a place of hate and ignorance and stupidity." And that for me, being a storyteller and being less and have to be in my position to get to work with people that are incredible, brave people, people that wants to tell stories that are maybe not always comfortable or that are needed and necessary. That for me is the greatest gift.

Jenny Curtis: Noomi Rapace, thank you so much.

Noomi Rapace: Thank you.

Jenny Curtis: So much for joining me today. This has been just an unbelievable conversation and I was so looking forward to talking to you because you're (crosstalk).

Noomi Rapace: Oh, thank you. You're amazing. Thank you for this. It was truly, actually fun talking to you.

Jenny Curtis: Oh wow. Well, you're welcome to come back any time.

Noomi Rapace: Amazing. Maybe I'll interview you next time.

Jenny Curtis: Thank you, Noomi. Hollywood Unscripted is created by CurtCo Media. This special episode of the Stuck At Home series was hosted and produced by me, Jenny Curtis, with guest Noomi Rapace. Co-produced and edited by Jay Whiting, the executive producer of Hollywood Unscripted is Stuart Halperin. The Hollywood Unscripted theme song is by Celleste and Derek Dick. Make sure to subscribe so you don't miss any special episodes of Hollywood Unscripted Stuck At Home. And we want to hear from you. Leave us a rating and a review. Tell us what you like, even what you don't like, maybe we can be better. Thanks for listening. Stay safe and healthy and we'll see you next time. CurtCo Media, media for your mind.