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# Patricia Arquette Doesn't Know What Day It Is 90% of the Time

The actress says '100%' of her movies and TV shows have been good for her

By *John Jurgensen*

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Patricia Arquette's recent roles found her 'playing more complicated types of people than I think I could have when I was younger,' she said.

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Like much of the nation, Patricia Arquette was riveted by the trial of Alex Murdaugh, the disgraced South Carolina lawyer convicted of murdering his wife and son in 2021. She watched his testimony with an actor's eye for performance. Now she's exploring the sensational case from a victim's perspective, playing wife Maggie Murdaugh in an eight-part drama on Hulu.

It's the latest in a series of knotty characters embraced by Arquette, 57. In the ongoing "Severance," she plays a manager at the center of a mind-bending corporate conspiracy. In "Escape at Dannemora" and "The Act," two acclaimed series based on real-life crime stories, Arquette portrayed women who toggle between manipulator and victim. The dramas found her "playing more complicated types of people than I think I could have when I was younger," says the actress, who had a breakthrough role in 1993's "True Romance."

"Murdaugh: Death in the Family," starring Jason Clarke as Alex Murdaugh and Johnny Berchtold as son Paul Murdaugh, is now streaming on Hulu and has its series finale Nov. 19. Here, Arquette discusses spicy coffee and getting over vanity.

**You don't have a Monday-through-Friday job, so do Mondays carry much weight for you?**

I have the weirdest relationship with time and space. I don't have little kids to get up and to get to school anymore, and all that stuff that anchors your life to weekday things. Probably 90% of the time, I don't know what day it is. Unless I'm working, often with super early call times at like 5:30. Then I just get up, get coffee, look at my lines again before I get in the car to head to work.



Patricia Arquette's role as Maggie in 'Murdaugh: Death in the Family' is the latest in a series of knotty characters embraced by the actress.

DANIEL DELGADO JR./DISNEY

### **When you're not working what's your wake-up routine?**

I used to luxuriate in sleeping in. Then I went through menopause, getting up a lot at night, having these weird hot flashes, and now I can't sleep in. But I'm kind of embracing it on the other side. I appreciate what the light of the morning looks like and the new possibilities every day brings.

### **Is coffee involved?**

I've been up for a couple hours now, and I'm just about to make some. I do weird things with my coffee. I add cinnamon and sometimes a little chili pepper.

### **What morning rituals do you try to stick to?**

Right now I'm kind of committed to going through boxes that I haven't had time to go through in like 25 years. So I'll roll out of bed and right into the chaos around me. Organizing, scanning, shredding things. I want to make more space for exercise, meditating and art because I'm a very artsy craftsy person.

### **Tell me if this is too personal but how does all this factor into your dating life?**

People who are pursuing you will say, “Oh, that sounds fun. I’d love to come over and help you.” They’re very sweet but, um, no thank you. I don’t want people going through all my junk with me.



‘When I was younger, I got to play the ingenue, the object of desire,’ she said. ‘As I got older I had this transition to digging in deeper and playing this shadow side of women.’

DANIEL DELGADO JR./DISNEY

**The Murdaugh story has already been the subject of books, podcasts, docu-series and a Lifetime movie. Was that a deterrent?**

I also asked that question: Why are we making this? To me a part of true crime that’s often missing is how the victims feel about the relationship and how it revealed itself as unhealthy. I did a bunch of research on narcissistic abusive relationships and how beguiling and confusing they are. I was really interested in exploring different phases of that awakening to realize you don’t even know who you’re with. That’s a terrifying thing to discover.

**Did you draw on any personal relationships with people whose behavior you wanted to change?**

It’s not as dramatic as all of this by a long shot, but my dad [the late actor Lewis Arquette] was incredibly charming and not honest with my mom a lot. That was very confusing for her to live in that dynamic.

### **What do your recent characters have in common?**

When I was younger, I got to play the ingenue, the object of desire. As I got older I had this transition to digging in deeper and playing this shadow side of women. One thing that has served me very well is not caring about vanity, and that's counterintuitive to how we as actresses are conditioned. Yes, Hollywood has limited women, but sometimes women limit themselves in fear of how people will see them. "No, I can't gain weight for that. No, I don't want to look like that." I've had many of the most interesting parts of my career now, but part of that is because of my total commitment to exploring all these different types of people without the limit of what Hollywood thinks of how I look.



Patricia Arquette's breakthrough role was in the 1993 film 'True Romance.'

WARNER BROS/EVERETT COLLECTION

### **What do you think your career batting average is, the percentage of good stuff you've been in compared to the less-good stuff overall?**

When I was starting out, I was a mom at 20 and I was really broke. So even if I got a job in a movie that I knew wasn't going to be particularly good, it would help me buy diapers and get to the pediatrician. Also, when I started, I wanted to work with great actors, directors and writers. So I wasn't making my choices based on what would be the biggest movie or make me the biggest star. Have there been movies that didn't work out? Sure. But I'd say, for me, it's 100% good.

100%!

But for viewers, maybe 70%. I'd still say I've been in a lot of damn good things.

**What's a piece of advice that has stuck with you over the years?**

One was from my dad, who I loved and who was a working actor my whole life. He always said, "When you audition, just go in, do your best and then leave it there—it's out of your hands." Then, when I was a young actor, a friend of mine, Viggo Mortensen, said to me on [1991 movie] "The Indian Runner," "When they say 'action,' it doesn't mean you have to do anything." I still try to remind myself of that. Just take a deep breath and relax.

*This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.*

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