

Talent

What Happened Next Was...

After Tom Noonan won the grand prize at last year's Sundance Film Festival for *What Happened Was . . .*—a darkly comic if claustrophobic look at a desperate would-be couple on their first date—financing his next project should have been a breeze. But Noonan claims that when he began filming *The Wife*, “I borrowed everything I could in the world and took all the money I’d saved, and we were able to shoot for one week.” A French production company stepped in with funds at the last moment, allowing Noonan to shoot the movie without compromising his funny but painfully observant story. Showing at Lincoln Center on June 15 at 6:30 (see “Museums, Societies, Etc.” for info), the film tells of two therapists—one (Julie Hagerty) addicted to Quaaludes, the other (Noonan) with a vicious tongue and wandering eye—who are confronted one evening by a deeply unhappy patient (Wallace Shawn) and his erratic, poorly educated wife (Noonan’s real-life wife, Karen Young, pictured above). The two interlopers end up staying for dinner and—as in *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*—don’t leave until their strained relationships are ruthlessly exposed. Perhaps best known for his unsettlingly sympathetic portrayal of a serial killer in *Manhunter*, Noonan clearly has no problem playing edgy people. Did he like his character, who treats Hagerty so nastily? “But she’s a *junkie*,” he laughs in defense. “I find him funny; I like that kind of mean humor.”



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