

Episode 06 - BROADWAY DANNY ROSE (1994)

MUSIC - Agita by Nick Apollo Forte

Introduction

BROADWAY DANNY ROSE is the 12th film written and directed by Woody Allen.

A love letter to his comic roots, BROADWAY DANNY ROSE marks the time when Allen managed to synthesise his European influences with his American humour into something all his own. It's a small story – and a short one – but Allen's story is full of heart and he creates two of his best characters in Danny and Tina.

Woody Allen stars as Danny Rose. The character's name has become an archetype – a naive but lovable talent manager, who would do anything for his acts. In a great chequered suit, Rose represents all that Allen loves about show business. In fact, despite not being a particularly funny film, it's Allen's love letter to comedy.

Welcome to the Woody Allen Pages podcast, from me, the creator of the Woody Allen Pages website. This week, episode six, we look at 1984's BROADWAY DANNY ROSE. We'll look at what I loved and didn't love, how it got made and much more. Of course, spoilers are everywhere.

SANDY BARON: Are you finished? Because I have the greatest Danny Rose story. Hold it now. Are you finished? I have the greatest Danny Rose story, all right? You wanna do anything? This is gonna take some time.

JACKIE GAYLE: Can I call home?

SANDY BARON: Go ahead.

CORBETT MONICA: Coffee.

SANDY BARON: Are you ready? We're gonna be here a while. This is the greatest Danny Rose story. This is the one with Lou Canova.

HOWARD STORM: The tall guy, the singer?

Conception and story

The film opens with one of the most celebrated scenes in Allen's film career. One that has been parodied and used by many others. We open on a bunch of comedians trading stories. And it sets the stage for the film. Allen has included these comedians for a reason. He is paying tribute to a particular time and place in the history of comedy.

From the 1920s, the Catskills mountains in upstate New York had hundreds of resorts which were favoured by Jewish families. Nicknamed the Borscht Belt, these resorts were filled with activity over the summer, including plenty of comedians who would play to the crowds looking for entertainment.

The comedy that developed there was very Jewish and very broad to appeal to families and parents. Lots of jokes about badgering wives and mother-in-laws. Lots of bad puns and being full of it. In its height in the 40s and 50s, the counter culture hadn't happened yet. This was old fashioned stuff.

Still, it was a hugely important stomping ground for hundreds of Jewish comedians, some of which went on to massive fame. People like SID CAESAR, who Allen wrote for, and MEL BROOKS, CARL REINER, JOAN RIVERS, DON RICKLES and much more. Oh, and as the scene was dying out, a young Woody Allen. Jewish comedy would become a big part of the culture in the decades to come and the Catskills was an important incubator.

All the comics that feature at the start of BROADWAY DANNY ROSE spent time in the Catskills at some point. This was an era when comics stayed in comedy. There was no film or sitcom to spin off into. Maybe some guest hosting gigs. Maybe playing Vegas. Most of them didn't even make comedy albums. But these were workhorse comics who played live and did a lot of it, and that was the end goal. Although the old horses here do a pretty great job being on film and narrating it, hitting their lines and selling the stories.

By the 60s and 70s, the Catskills scene was over. More importantly, comedy had moved on. A new generation of comics would come through, like LENNY BRUCE. And of course Allen himself would talk about psychoanalysis, sex topics, politics and just absurdity. People like him, Brooks, BILL COSBY, RICHARD PRYOR and others would become film and TV stars. And that Borscht Belt generation would be left behind.

By the 80s, and the making of BROADWAY DANNY ROSE, the scene was truly over, and there's probably a generation of comedy fans who have never heard of these comics at all. Yet, it wasn't long enough for it to settle into nostalgia. Til now - this film helped to pay tribute to that scene.

A couple of these comics like SANDY BARON and JACKIE GAYLE would continue to act in more roles after this and get some of their due. Not that this film turned them into stars. It was just enough that Allen said that these were

people worth remembering.

And Allen is of course always more than willing to live in the past a little. He's always reverent to heroes of the past. Look at his affection for the stars of radio in RADIO DAYS, or his deep respect jazz musicians and directors that came before him.

I don't know about you, but I love these guys. Watching these old hands trade stories is utterly fascinating. I assume that until they get to the Danny bits, it's all real stories, and apparently Allen shot a lot of it. Out of all the possible Woody Allen outtakes I think these are the ones that I would like to see the most. I just want more of these stories.

CORBETT MONICA: Morty, I tried Miami jokes. I don't know what works any more.

MORTY GUNTY: Why? What happened?

CORBETT MONICA: I got that big Miami joke that I do. About the hotels being expensive and how much it costs. Like \$150 a day for a sleeping room, and I said to the clerk "What's cheaper?" He said "I got a room for \$10, but you make your own bed." So he gave me a hammer and some nails. That's the joke.

MORTY GUNTY: It's a good joke. It works.

Yet it's interesting that when we get to the meat of the film, it's not a story about a comedy or a comedian. It's also not a very Jewish film.

What we get is the story of Danny Rose, the idealistic manager and the struggling act he believes in above all reason. And the inevitable tragedy that will come.

The story of Danny and Lou, with the singer dumping the manager who believed in him through hard times, is taken from real life. Allen's manager JACK ROLLINS had discovered and nurtured a young HARRY BELAFONTE, who dumped him as soon as he got big.

Belafonte was a struggling club singer and a short order cook when Rollins discovered him in the fifties. Belafonte was doing folk stuff and Rollins convinced him to go calypso, which was a huge success. But as soon as he became famous, he went with another agent. Rollins remained bitter about it for the rest of his life, and told anyone who would listen, including HARRY BELAFONTE biographers. I don't know if anyone ever asked Belafonte about BROADWAY DANNY ROSE.

Rollins also appears in the film. He's amongst the comedians trading stories at the film's beginning. He doesn't speak, but it's very clear that Allen was writing about Jack and so he put him in.

LOU: We're sure about a lot of things. Tina and I have been doing a lot of

discussing. I feel for myself that I gotta make a few changes.

DANNY: What kind of changes?

LOU: Like management.

DANNY: What do you mean, management? What do you mean, management?

LOU: Tina's really close to Sid Bacharach. You had to notice him there tonight. He was there to see me.

DANNY: I don't understand. You wanna change management?

LOU: Don't think it's not hard for me to say, but I gotta do what's right for my career.

DANNY: What do you mean? Am I hear...? I can't believe you're saying this.

So Allen had Jewish humour and the story of a Jamaican Calypso singer. Yet somehow, Allen wanted to go down yet another cultural road. Allen has often referred to BROADWAY DANNY ROSE as his Italian film. Because there's a couple of very key Italian influences on the film.

The most prevalent is the Italian Neorealism movement. In the 80s Allen was using his film influences but he's not quite synthesising everything together. To use a jazz analogy - he's doing great song interpretations and definitely making them his own. But he wasn't yet pioneering his own style.

So the song interpretation that Allen is doing here is Italian Neorealism. It was a film movement that really flowered in the forties and fifties after the devastation of Italy in World War II. The whole film studio system of that country was left in tatters and what was on people's minds was the struggles of getting by and the injustice around them.

Enter directors like VITTORIO DE SICA and ROBERTO ROSSELLINI. The common elements of the movement were these gritty working class stories. They were tragedies and bittersweet, made on small budgets, and made with a brutal realism, as the name suggests. They couldn't afford studios so they were usually shot on real locations, and used many non actors. It's very indie, so to speak. Allen has often cited De Sica's 1948 film BICYCLE THIEVES as one of the best films ever made.

The scene didn't last - by the mid 50s, Italians didn't really want to wallow in post war tragedy. And the film industry improved and big budget studio films returned. It was only five years after BICYCLE THIEVES that an American studio would release the colourful romantic getaway of ROMAN HOLIDAY. It still blows my mind that ROMAN HOLIDAY and BICYCLE THIEVES was just five years apart.

It's not really possible to make an Italian Neorealism film in the early 80s of New York. But Allen took many of the elements and made something else - something with plenty of comedy, let's not forget. But this is a film about street level schmucks. And it's the struggles and the doldrums of the characters that

drives the film.

And of course, black and white. Italian Neorealism was in black and white, but black and white by necessity. Allen doesn't have to make films in black and white, but chose to do so. But this isn't the deep rich black and white of

MANHATTAN. This more white, more dry, and more stark. It's more fitting with the cinematography of Italian Neorealism. There's very little that is romantic here.

Other Italian elements breathe through the film. There's a fair bit of FREDERICO FELLINI here, who Allen paid greater tribute to in STARDUST MEMORIES. You can see it best in several scenes where Allen focuses on extras with very interesting faces, or the lovely and charming acts that Danny looks after.

I'm not sure whether Allen considered a singer closer to HARRY BELAFONTE but in the end the character he created for the singer was Italian. The songs are Italian. There's Italian characters all around the film. Even MIA FARROW plays an Italian person.

PARTY WOMAN: What are you doing with money?

PARTY MAN: Are you a big shot, tearing your money? I been tearing money since my first Holy Communion. See this? 10 dollars. I don't care. Here. What does it mean?

PARTY MAN 2: 20, 20.

PARTY MAN: 20? 20, 40, 60 dollars. What does it mean, you know? It means nothin'.

It would have felt even more like Italian Neorealism if he could have set the film in the 40s as he originally envisioned. But New York had changed so much and Allen struggled to find locations that would work without significant cost.

So he moved it up to the 60s, and quite late 60s at that. This wasn't the era that JACK ROLLINS was working in. It's an even sadder era for these old Vaudeville acts and ballroom singers - there was another decade or two of being irrelevant. BOB DYLAN and THE BEATLES were kicking about at this point. The cultural memories we have of this time is full Woodstock colour. Yet this film is about the people who the colour left behind, and remained in black and white.

One location that was available was the Carnegie Deli. It stood near Carnegie Hall on 7th Avenue, opening in 1937. Long associated with the theatre scene, it served as the location for the film's bookends with the comedians. We also see it a couple of times during the main story of the film. Allen had trouble casting someone to play the owner, so he used LEO STEINER, the real owner.

It's interesting how Allen uses the location to stir emotions. We see this location at the start of the film, and we don't necessarily expect to see it in the flashback story. We finally see Danny in there in an incidental scene towards the end of the story. It serves to remind us that Danny is in the same world as the comics.

And then that ending. It's not an untypical ending - boy chases girl and gets to her. But then we pull out and see that they are in front of the Carnegie Deli. It doesn't teach us anything new about the characters. The characters don't have special meanings with the place. It's just that satisfaction of everything tying up together. That there is some order to the world around us. In a way, it's more like solving a Rubik's Cube. It's order from chaos. That's the only way I can explain why the ending works so nicely for me. It's also filmed and acted brilliantly.

The heart of the film is, of course, Danny Rose. He's such an adorable character, and it's one of Allen's very best performances - and could well be the best.

Danny is very sweet and likeable. And likeable is not always easy - especially when Allen isn't relying on his usual comic tricks. He's also not playing the know-it-all smart ass. He's a loser and we don't so much root for him as much as we want him to get through the film with the minimal amount of hurt.

He's not a perfect person. He's full of flaws. He gives everyone the same patter - that Star Smile Strong (which was something Allen heard from another comedian in his standup days). He throws his friend Barney Dunn, the ventriloquist, under the bus so to speak. And worse, he's blind to himself. We find out the very first time we meet him that his acts leave him, and he does nothing about it.

PHIL: I'll tell you what, give me Sonny Chase. He's the best act you got. He's fast, he's funny.

DANNY: I don't handle Sonny any more.

PHIL: Since when?

DANNY: It's a long story. I discovered the kid. He slept on my sofa. I supported him. I don't wanna bad-mouth the kid, but he's a horrible, dishonest, immoral louse. And I say that with all due respect.

In writing, Danny Rose has become a trope. That so-and-so is the Broadway Danny Rose of sports, or music, or some other industry. In the NEWSROOM, Aaron Sorkin wrote a line about someone being the Broadway Danny Rose of tabloid suffering.

MACKENZIE: How do we get the best guests?

DON: There's a guy you're gonna have to deal with named Dylan Kagin. He's like the Broadway Danny Rose of tabloid suffering.

MACKENZIE: He's an agent?

The world is full of Danny Roses - these agents or managers who love their acts and would do anything for them, but never gets a break. Especially in music, so many of the big bands were discovered in a local scene then ultimately met some power manager. In all those stories there was a Danny Rose somewhere.

Danny's not really a traditional film hero, and his story isn't one that transforms him. He doesn't go from a Hobbit to a hero. He is tested, but mainly goes back to being his old self. You get the feeling he might well get hurt again by another act. If this was a Hollywood film, Danny would have a big internal revelation, he would change his life and Lou would stay and he would win Tina over and he would be Jerry Maguire. But no - this a tragedy, and the tragedy is that we're not sure if Danny ever learns.

Another tragic figure that doesn't learn is Lou, played by Nick Apollo Forte. It's funny how we feel for Lou over the course of the film. He's not the hero either - we don't really believe he's a big star that never got his due. He drinks, he cheats and is otherwise a bit of a pig.

But on the other hand, we do wish him better. And we don't know what happens to him either. We know he's not on easy street. He's got plenty of tough times ahead and now he's got no Danny by his side.

It's the balancing act that Allen plays with in this film. Team Danny, or Team Lou. Or team there-is-no-God-only-suffering. There's no easy heroes here. Just people trying to get by. Did Lou do the right thing? Or Danny? We'll never know.

This film is still a comedy but it's a very different kind of comedy for Allen. It's not slapstick like his early work and it's not a black satire like *STARDUST MEMORIES*. It's humour is much more subtle. There weren't many Italian Neorealist comedies.

But the jokes keep the film moving even when we get quite serious. There's a wonderful scene of Tina and Danny, on the run, where Allen pretty much serves us the philosophy of the film. It's funny, but not hilarious. Mainly, the witty banter serves to just lift the dialogue. Allen's writing is top notch.

TINA: Yeah, believe me. You must be doin' somethin' wrong if everybody leaves you.

DANNY: How? What am I doing wrong? I find 'em, I discover 'em, I breathe life into 'em and then they go. And no guilt. They don't feel guilty or anything. They just split.

*TINA: Guilty? What the hell is that? They see somethin' better and they grab it.
Who's got time for guilt?*

*DANNY: Guilt is important. It's important to feel guilty, otherwise you're capable
of terrible things. It's very important to be guilty. I'm guilty all the time and I never
did anything.*

A lot of the comedy is situational. Danny spends a lot of the film on the run with Tina. It's the crux of the film - that Danny has to get Tina to Lou's gig, and they go on a number of adventures. It almost feels a little like MIDNIGHT RUN or those 80s films where there's an odd couple on the run. There's all sorts of misadventures - from a fortune teller, to an Italian wedding, to a diner and more.

That on the run but takes up a good part of the film, but it's not what is interesting about the film. Still, it ends well, when it culminates at a shoot out that takes place where the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade floats are made. It's a shoot out - which Allen undercuts with the helium of the balloons. It's a bit of silly in a bit of serious. It's that tone that this film achieves so well.

HOOD: Don't move or I'll blow your brains out!

DANNY: Don't shoot! I'm just a beard.

TINA: You're making a mistake, he's just a beard.

HOOD: Don't tell me you're the beard, you goddamn little rat.

DANNY: Run, Tina, run! He's outta bullets! It's our chance! It's our chance!

TINA: All right, I'm coming!

That mix of silly and serious is also present in the almost final scene when Danny hosts thanksgiving with his acts, and Tina comes to apologise. The scene is sad and funny at the same time. The colourful characters and Danny's energy keeps it light, but Tina's story comes to a head.

Tina is perhaps the closest thing the film has to a villain. She is certainly Danny's antagonist, and she is the anti-Danny. Throughout the film, we get this battle of philosophies between the two. Tina's selfish, you gotta do what you gotta do kind of person, the opposite of Danny. She is the one who stabs Danny in the back. While Danny is about forgiveness - maybe too much. He is overly forgiving.

By the end, she is living with guilt and seeks forgiveness. And Danny says no - his journey is to be learn to be colder. But of course he relents and he goes and gets Tina. It's interesting when the film's hero doesn't learn. He's doomed to repeat mistakes and trust the wrong people. Our hero remains in a tragedy, but we get a happy ending. That's this film, a tragedy with a happy ending.

Production and cast

Allen shot in his beloved New York City. The production overlapped with the post production of ZELIG, which was made at the same time as A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S SEX COMEDY. Allen was trying to figure out just how much he could make, but would later say it was far too hard to make two films at once.

In reaction to ZELIG, which was a hugely complicated production, BROADWAY DANNY ROSE is a very modest film. There's only three leads, lots of existing locations and most of it minutes from where Allen lived. The whole film runs around 80 minutes.

There's even a curious shot of a New York street where they pass a cinema that is screening HALLOWEEN III, which was released in 1982 - well past the late 60s setting of the film. Allen didn't even bother to cover that up, or ask the cinema to change it. Apparently Allen even shot this scene 50 times.

Still, Allen has said that the film was the best reflection of New York as he saw it. The mix of the gritty streets and the skylines was more in line with Allen's vision of New York.

It's hard to really explain how out of time this film is. In a list of the top 100 films of 1984, only two are black and white - BROADWAY DANNY ROSE and STRANGER THAN PARADISE by JIM JARMUSCH. This film seems like a million years ago because it's set in the past, black and white and so old fashioned. And it's made in the same year as THE TERMINATOR and the second INDIANA JONES. Not even the first one. BACK TO THE FUTURE was the next year. How is this film created in the same industry as THE TERMINATOR and BACK TO THE FUTURE.

DANNY: They call me old-fashioned. But if it's old-fashioned to like Mr Danny Kaye, Mr Bob Hope, Mr Milton Berle, then all right. Then I'm old-fashioned.

The truth was, it kind of wasn't. This is the early years of Woody Allen as pretty much a film industry in his own right. A very small industry, that employed the same people all the time, and based in New York. This was the golden period of the team that made ANNIE HALL who stuck together mostly for the next couple of decades, give or take a cinematographer. ROBERT GREENHUT, SUSAN E MORSE, JULIET TAYLOR, MEL BOURNE, JEFFREY KURLAND.

KURLAND in particular does a great job with the costumes. Without a colour palette to work with, he still manages to craft a style. Danny Rose and Tina in particular are crafted so distinctively that you could probably make them into Halloween costumes. I really just love Danny's jacket and glasses.

GORDON WILLIS is back as cinematographer, his seventh film with Allen. He was a technical whizz, and made the black and white work. But it was definitely a breeze compared to the technical marvel that is ZELIG, which we will get to in a future episode.

On screen, MIA FARROW makes her regular appearance. Farrow's performance was based on ANNA PELLEGRINO RAO, the eccentric owner of the already eccentric Rao's, an Italian restaurant in New York. Rao's opened in 1896 and only had a small number of tables and all of them are reserved. The tables are so exclusive that when people who have a table die, they pass it on to their kids. To get a table, one of these table owners have to take you or say that you are taking their place.

For some reason, Woody Allen had a table. At least he did in the 80s. Not sure how - he surely didn't inherit one. But he ate there weekly and got to know ANNA RAO, with her big hair, her big glasses and her very Italian affectations. For this film, he basically asked Farrow to do an ANNA RAO impression. It's hard to say how well she did, but she did succeed in being this larger than life character onscreen. Anna's son, FRANK PELLEGRINO would later work with Allen in MANHATTAN MURDER MYSTERY.

TINA: I never feel guilty. I just think you gotta do what you gotta do, you know. Life's short. You don't get any medals for bein' a boy scout.

But who is very new was whoever would play Lou Canova. Lots of people auditioned for Lou. There are roles we know that Allen searched far and wide for. But as far as I know, Lou was one of the more difficult ones to cast. He has to carry a lot of the film. He has to sing. Be Italian. Be charming, someone who could be a major singing star. But also play a could-have-been.

It's fun finding out who auditioned for the role. Every few years another star reveals that he also went for it. The list of prominent actors we know of so far include DANNY AIELLO, ROBERT DENIRO, ROBERT GOULET, SYLVESTER STALLONE and JERRY VALE.

But JULIET TAYLOR, Allen's casting director, came across NICK APOLLO FORTE's album at a record store. He did well in the audition, but Allen wasn't sure. Apparently DIANE KEATON helped to talk Allen into it.

It was a long journey to find NICK APOLLO FORTE, but after they found him, he embodied the role. He was Lou Canova. Forte was a struggling singer. He wasn't signed, he played small clubs, and wasn't making a living. But he was bullish, confident and proud. So much so that I wonder if Allen actually changed the script to accommodate the actor he found. Because otherwise it's really perfect casting.

DANNY: What are you talking about, I should be the beard? I don't wanna be a beard.

Lou: Come on. I'm tellin' ya, I'll do a great job if she's there. Without her I'm gonna be lost.

DANNY: Since when? This is business.

LOU: Why are you makin' such a big deal? Terry goes home right after the show, then I'll take her off your hands. But when there's any people around, she's with you.

DANNY: No, it's not nice. You know you're gonna wind up in alimony jail.

LOU I can't function without her. I'm lost.

DANNY: Since when? Who is this woman? Why does she have such a hold on you?

LOU: I don't know what it is about this woman. I love her. Maybe it's a whole mother thing.

DANNY: Whole mother thing? Your mother's alive. Let me take her.

LOU: She gives me confidence. I love her. What do you want me to say? I'm scared enough as it is.

Forte did more than act. He also brought the songs. He dabbled in songwriting and always had a couple of originals in his albums. So it was natural for Allen and Forte to agree to make Forte's songs also Lou's songs. Forte had sung them hundreds of times.

The main track used in the film, in the opening credits and many times throughout, was AGITA. Agita is Italian slang, meaning heartburn or indigestion. Basically the pain you get from eating too much. It's quite a fun novelty song.

Forte also supplied other songs for the film. And Allen's regular musical collaborator at this time, DICK HYMAN, arranged AGITA into an instrumental score. That score, with very heavy use of piano accordion, helped to make the film feel even more Italian.

MUSIC - Agita by Nick Apollo Forte

Forte capitalised on his new found fame when he released a mini album of the songs used in the film. But it's long out of print not available digitally.

Being in a Woody Allen film was supposed to be Forte's big break. He was acclaimed in the role and was offered other roles, but for whatever reason it would never work out. But Forte didn't like Hollywood, and ultimately Hollywood didn't like him. He went back to music. He died in 2020, but a couple of years earlier left us a note on the website. He said he was still grateful for everything Woody Allen did for him, and grateful to Woody Allen fans who have

always been good to him.

And let's not forget the other lead actor here - Woody Allen. This was his best acting role to date, I think. He is a little silly but he's not using laughs to win people over. He totally sells Danny in a way he's not really able to with other lead roles. It's sad because after this I feel like Allen lost confidence in his own acting and would never write a role this complex for himself again.

DANNY: I've always tried to teach you, Lou, I've always tried to show you that sooner or later you're gonna have to square yourself with the big guy. Is that true? You're gonna square yourself? You're gonna pay your dues someday. You're a married man. My aunt Rose. Take my aunt Rose. Not a beautiful woman at all. She looked like something you buy in a live-bait store. But why? She had wisdom. And she used to say "You can't ride two horses with one behind." So you see what I'm sayin'? That's my point.

Release and reception

BROADWAY DANNY ROSE was released on 27 January 1984 in the US by Orion Pictures. This was the third film in his deal with Orion, but the deal was still only two years old at the time. Allen was working fast.

The film also played the Cannes Film Festival that year. It was Allen's second film to play the prestigious French festival, following MANHATTAN. And it starts a run of four films in a row that would play at Cannes.

I love this period of Allen films, and I think most people do. This 80s Orion Pictures run was important to cementing Woody Allen's reputation. In the late 70s when he made ANNIE HALL and MANHATTAN, it announced this ground breaking director. The 80s Orion films proved that he could be consistent. This is also film number 3 in a run of 36 years where he produced at least a film a year. Up until now, he had the odd break every four years or so. That was over. This is basically Woody Allen - on a roll.

The only thing that stops this from being major career landmark for Allen is the fact that all his films around this time were this good. This film followed ZELIG, which would be followed by THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO, HANNAH AND HER SISTERS and RADIO DAYS. There is barely a bad moment in the early Orion Pictures run. If I had to rank this one compared to the films around it, it's actually surprising for me to say that it's probably the weakest. It's a completely personal assessment. Maybe it's flavours are just too subtle - but only compared to like HANNAH AND HER SISTERS.

What works for this film is both its simplicity and its complexity.

The film and story is very simple. Three characters. No special effects, no avant-garde weirdness, no obscure European philosophers. The only thing really is the black and white, which probably put some people off. I wonder that if this film was shot in colour, it would be more famous, and if it would sit alongside a film like HANNAH AND HER SISTERS as one of those towering works. But it's otherwise modest, accessible and kind of easy to like.

But where it's complex is what it is trying to say. There's no good guys or bad guys here. Is Lou wrong or is Danny wrong? And then there's all that talk of guilt and suffering. The film is simple, but it's not easy.

And the film is modest, but it's not unambitious. I mean, it's a black and white downhearted comedy that deals with existential guilt. With lots of cult Italian film flavours. Allen is definitely trying for something.

Perhaps the greatest compliment this film ever got was from Allen himself. He usually hates his own work, but he's spoken well of this one. It's absolutely essential in the Woody Allen filmography.

DANNY: You know, my uncle Morris, the famous diabetic from Brooklyn used to say "If you hate yourself, then you hate your work."

TINA: I sleep at night. It's you that's got the ulcer.

DANNY: I got an ulcer, but you know it may be a good thing. You know what my philosophy of life is? That it's important to have some laughs, no question about it, but you gotta suffer a little too because otherwise you miss the whole point to life. And that's how I feel.

TINA: Know what my philosophy of life is?

DANNY: I can imagine.

TINA: It's over quick, so have a good time. You see want you want, go for it. Don't pay attention to anyone else. And do it to the other guy first, cause if you don't he'll do it to you.

DANNY: This is a philosophy of life? This sounds like the screenplay to "Murder Incorporated".

Fun facts

Here's some fun facts about BROADWAY DANNY ROSE.

Carnegie Deli were thrilled to host Allen and thrilled with what he did for them. They honoured him with a sandwich called The Woody Allen, and on the menu it was called The Sandwich that BROADWAY DANNY ROSE Made Famous. It's two slices of white bread without 15cm of sliced corned beef and pastrami. I have no idea how anyone can physically fit it into their mouths.

Carnegie Deli sadly closed down at that location in 2016. It is one of the great Woody Allen New York locations. Allen had a visit before it closed, and had one last Woody Allen sandwich. I imagine he shared it with several small families. It's sad thinking that the deli is gone, but one day it could come back.

You're never going to get a table at Rao's and Carnegie Deli's now gone. There is one food reference left in the film that you can go to. One of the gangsters that chase Danny and Tina is played by PETER CASTELLOTTI, who is the owner of John's Pizzeria chain in New York. Allen says it's the best pizza in the world and is generally considered one of the best in New York. Allen used the original John's Pizzeria on Bleecker St onscreen in a scene in MANHATTAN.

Finally I mentioned that Jack Rollins appears in the film. But so do his parents. Bob and Etta Rollins appear in the film as the balloon folding act.

Wrap up

Thanks for listening to this episode of the Woody Allen Pages podcast.

Next week. We look at a delightful comedy, with one of Woody Allen's best so-called muses.

DANNY: But the thing to remember is before you go out on stage, you gotta look in the mirror and you gotta say your three S's: Star, smile, strong.

BALLOON ACT: Star, smile, strong.