



# Want to meet Hollywood royalty?

Carole Radziwill chats with Annette Bening about her new movie, life with Warren, “scene spill” and Oscar buzz.

**CAROLE RADZIWILL:** No one plays a woman on the verge of cracking up better than you: *American Beauty*, *Being Julia* and now your latest role in *Running With Scissors*. You don’t seem crazy—are you?

**ANNETTE BENING:** [Laughs.] No! I’ve always been pretty levelheaded. In show business you need to have a certain internal stability. But when I study people, like the character in this movie, I feel very close to them. That’s part of my job, to get to a point where I can imagine that happening.

**CR:** You can?

**AB:** Sure. My character in *Running With Scissors* is manic-depressive. She starts out as a wonderfully eccentric person, and then descends into a terrible illness.

**CR:** This mother has no maternal instinct, and she gives away her only child so she can pursue her dreams. Yet, unbelievably, there’s a humanity to her.

**AB:** Yes, because we’re not all evil or all good, and we all make mistakes to one degree or another. In a film, if you can capture what’s going on underneath, you can begin to make a connection between the character and the people watching it.

**CR:** How come, in all the years you’ve been famous, I’ve never read about you stumbling out of a bar at two in the morning?

**AB:** Because I’m home, asleep in my bed! I think what’s interesting about the whole paparazzi thing is that unless you’re Brad Pitt or Madonna, you can pretty much avoid it. You know when you’re going to an opening that you will be photographed, so that’s fine. And you know the restaurants that have paparazzi, so you don’t go to them.

**CR:** I read an interview once where you talked about something called “scene spill.”

**AB:** Oh, mmm-hm. [Laughs.]

**CR:** So you’re working on a film and there’s a love interest and it “spills over” outside of the film. For instance, with *Bugsy* you were working with your future husband....

**AB:** It’s so funny. It happens all the time.

**CR:** The boundaries blur, between the pretend movie life and real life?

**AB:** Yes, and sometimes you end up married for 15 years with four children! [Laughs.] But in a way, I fall in love with all the people I’m working with, women, directors, everybody. As actors, that’s actually one of the real pleasures of the work. You have this weird opportunity to get unnaturally close to people very quickly.

**CR:** Your family is as close to royalty in this town as it gets. Does the insatiable media scrutiny annoy you?

**AB:** If you’re an actor, you have to find a way to make peace with all the media attention. Recently a very sweet journalist asked me, “So who made the first move, you or Warren?” I thought, I’ve been married for 15 years, and somebody is still asking me that!

**CR:** So who made the first move?

**AB:** [Laughs.] It was pretty mutual. I tell people, “You know when you met your girlfriend or your wife or your boyfriend?” It wasn’t any different than that.

**CR:** Too bad, this is where fairy tales come in handy. They are more exciting than real life.

**AB:** And much more simple.

**CR:** There are whisperings that you’re going to be nominated again for an Oscar.

**AB:** Oh, we’d better knock on something!

Carole Radziwill is the author of *What Remains: A Memoir of Fate, Friendship & Love*.

## LUNCH DATA

**WHERE:** Chateau Marmont hotel, Hollywood, Calif.

**WHAT THEY ATE:** Annette and Carole both had artichoke soup and roasted beet salad with buffalo mozzarella and vinaigrette.