

September 25 - October 1, 2014

Theater



Q&A: Rachel Dratch

Tryst and shout
Dratch plays various
sex scandal figures
in *Tail! Spin!*

The erstwhile SNL star gets sketchy again in *Tail! Spin!* By Adam Feldman

In her seven-year stint on *Saturday Night Live*, which she left in 2006, Rachel Dratch created many memorable characters, including buzzkiller Debbie Downer and overdemonstrative "luvah" Virginia Clarvin. Now she's making her Off Broadway debut in *Tail! Spin!*, a docucomedy about political sex scandals (involving the likes of Anthony Weiner and Larry Craig). The petite, saucer-eyed Dratch plays all the female roles. We met up with her for a backstage chat.

Which of the women you play in *Tail! Spin!* is the most fun to do?

Barbara Walters! But of the real people? I like doing Larry Craig's wife. She's completely hook-line-and-sinker: She believes everything he says, and she's just there to support and defend. That's a fun type to play.

She's sort of poignant, in a way.

Not that much. [Laughs] I mean, maybe in real life. I was trying to think, What are we saying with the show? Because it could have larger takeaways, but my thing is just to go for the funny. Sex scandals have been happening since the dawn of politics, and I don't really have anything new to say about it. That's some thesis to write for a degree I'm not interested in pursuing.

I just read an SNL oral history, and it sounds like your experience was positive overall.

Everyone who comes through there knows that it's their total dream job, but also that there are things about it that are really hard, in terms of writing stuff and getting air time. A lot of times you're sitting on the sidelines while everyone's running around putting on wigs for the live show and you're like [sobbing sound], and if that happens a few times in a row you start to implode. It's a mix of excitement and facing your own ego. Everyone's shit comes out [laughs].

You have a four-year-old son now.

How has that changed your relationship to the showbiz game?

When you first leave SNL, you want your own show, you want movies—you picture it all. Nothing was really happening when I first left, so I had to adjust to being a regular working actor. But having a baby just flipped everything. I'd rather be hanging with him anyway. He's my main thing.

Do you have any desire to play bigger, more dramatic roles?

I wouldn't go for straight-up heavy drama with no comedy in it, 'cause I'm not that good at it. Know thyself! But I want to do more theater. I don't have the "Broadway" singing voice, but I have the voice of someone who comes on as the character and gets the wacky song, so I think I could do a musical within certain limitations. Just a comedy where you kind of get to go crazy every night and do different little things.

***Tail! Spin!* plays at the Lynn Redgrave Theatre through Nov 30. See Off Broadway.**