

# Sakina Jaffrey



Sakina’s performing arts career began at an early age. As a child, Sakina danced with the Joffrey Ballet. She made her acting debut at seventeen, in Wallace Shawn’s play *Marie and Bruce* at the Public Theater with Bob Balaban, Louise Lasser and Griffin Dunne. ¶ Later, Sakina graduated from Vassar College with a high honors degree in Chinese language and literature.

**Sakina Jaffrey** is an actress known for her film and television work. Recently, Sakina’s performances in the Netflix series *House of Cards* garnered rave reviews. In addition, Sakina has made television appearances on acclaimed shows such as *Law and Order*, *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *Girls*, *Blue Bloods*, and *Sex in the City*, among others. Furthermore, Sakina has performed in films such as *Definitely, Maybe*; *Before the Devil Knows You’re Dead*; *The Indian in the Cupboard*; and *Breakaway*.

**BIRTHPLACE**  
New York, NY, USA

**CURRENT RESIDENCE**  
New York, NY, USA

**PROFESSION**  
Actress

“Acting is not about being someone different. It’s finding the similarity in what is apparently different, and then finding myself in there.”

—Meryl Streep

## Reflections

### On Her Career Path

As a child, I danced with the Joffrey Ballet; that was probably my gateway to performing. When I was a high school senior, I auditioned for a Wallace Shawn play at the Public Theater in New York City. I got the role and my actors equity card. In college, I immersed myself in everything but drama. In fact, I was Chinese language and literature major. After college, however, I realized that there was nothing I loved more than acting. I still feel this way. I love character acting, and I look forward to continuing to create original and compelling characters.

Apart from acting jobs, the most interesting jobs I have had were writing an English language book in Taiwan, based on episodes of *The Brady Bunch*; working at a pre-release program at Green Haven Maximum Security Prison; and teaching

English as a second language in New York City.

### On Career Goals

Part of the beauty of this career is that you never know where it will take you. My goal for acting is to always pursue excellence. People who create their own work and their own characters, such as Louis C.K., Ricky Gervais, and Lena Dunham, inspire me. They write fabulously and create characters with loudly beating hearts. I hope that one day people will say the same about me.

### On Childhood

I was born in New York City, where I spent my first two years. From the ages two through five, I lived in Delhi. As a young girl coming back to the States from India, I remember being quite bewildered by many

things in the US: the food portions, the un-extended nuclear family, the rude way children talked to their parents, and the overt sexuality of Greenwich Village at the time, not to mention the new life I was expected to lead. I think I dealt with all of the change by hiding in characters I created to entertain my family. The characters were actually just different parts of myself that I wanted to explore. Then, through ballet, I was afforded the calm and assurance that came from the physical discipline and expertise in an art form I loved. Later, there were the crazier teen years that included sneaking into Studio 54 and dancing so much that I broke my leg! Even now, I don’t think my parents need to hear about that.