

DREAMING BIG

“IT’S AN
OVERWHELMING
EXPERIENCE”



@ELENAKENAJ

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7HOT

STORIES

“THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING”

ELENA TALKS ACTING IN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

When Season 2 of *Euphoria* aired last Spring, Elena was hurtled into a life of fame and fortune. Though a typical outside perspective focusses on the privilege of an A-list celebrities lifestyle, Elena explains the many downsides to being under constant observation.

Speaking to *Mystique*, Elena says while she undertsands that she's 'completely new to the scene', she can appreciate the pressure young celebrities face in the public eye.

'I think there is a common misconception in today's society that celebrities aren't normal people. Audiences place us on a pedestal, setting unrealistic expectations for us to fulfil regardless of our age or experience. And as a young person still developing, it's an overwhelming experience', she continues.

It's not an understatement for Elena to point this out. As the star of the teen hit drama, *Euphoria*, which has generated over \$30 million since its season 2 release, Elena found herself catapulted into the stardom that any 18 year old would have struggled with. Prior to her life on the HBO set,



Elena was content living a quiet life in a suburban Welsh town, finishing her A-level exams whilst working a £6 an hour part time job at McDonalds. Hence it's no surprise that Elena faced discomfort with the durastic changes and sudden attention the programme's success brought her: 'It's difficult to express this in a way that doesn't sound ungrateful. Don't get me wrong, I wouldn't change this job for the world, and in no way do I mean to take my position for granted. But I do find it genuinely frightening how valued fame is, and that's coming from somebody who's spent only two months living the Hollywood dream. Whereas Zendaya, you know, she's been in this position for years. And so the feeling that you can only leave

your house at 3am without being followed is something I never had to endure; and something I hope I never have to.'

Whilst filming the first season of *Euphoria*, Elena and the rest of the cast were forced to leave set indefinitely due to the outbreak of Covid 19 back in 2020. Prior to the disruption of a global pandemic, Elena was clocking in around 50 hours a week. Her HBO contract claimed 5 days of her week; beginning as early as 5am and ending, at times, in the early hours of the morning.

'It was a blessing in disguise I think... though I didn't realise it at the time, I definitely needed a break', Elena expresses.

Returning back to her childhood home, Elena spent three months hidden away in the Welsh countryside with her parents, until the summer of 2020 when filming gradually picked up again in LA and Elena was called back to continue her role as Maddy Perez.

'I love a big city- that's why I moved to the US, they have hundreds of them! But there is something so comforting about my hometown, however cliché it sounds, and I'm certain that nowhere in the world could ever replace it.'

WORDS BETH
MUNRO-MORRIS

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