

BRUSH WITH DEATH Parents grateful after fire rescue

BY JOHNNY DWYER

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Melissa Bloch intended to spend Saturday helping her friend pick out bridesmaids' dresses in the Garment District. Instead, she awoke in an ambulance, minutes after firefighters pulled her out of a burning apartment in Gramercy Park. Yesterday, the 22-year-old from Philadelphia was discharged from New York Weill Cornell Medical Center to her grateful parents. "Physically she's doing all right, but mentally she's pretty messed up," said her father, Dennis Bloch, 57, of Haverford, Penn. He said his daughter had been treated for burns to the arms and stomach and smoke inhalation. Mother Lori Bloch, 55, said the family is especially indebted to Lt. John Mahoney of Ladder 3. He crawled through black smoke and searing heat, finding Melissa Bloch unconscious on a love seat in the E. 18th St. apartment. "We're going to make a donation to the firemen's widows fund in honor of him. He saved her life," she said. Fire marshals believe the blaze was sparked by a faulty or overloaded electrical strip. Bloch was one of six people in the apartment. Also discharged yesterday from the Weill Center were Micah Lasher, 22, and Michelle Cruz, 23. Isabelle Heina, 21, who staggered out of the building to the sidewalk, where she was found by firefighters, suffered the worst injuries. She remained in critical condition, according to a Weill-Cornell official. Brian Mahanna, one of three tenants in the Gramercy Park apartment, was listed in a stable condition. Bloch's family found their daughter blackened by soot and smoke when they arrived at the hospital early Saturday. "She was pretty much in shock," her father said. "The last time she was in New York was the blackout. She's got a good track record with New York City," he said.

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