

August 2, 2001

Hi all,

Welcome to the first - and hopefully the longest - issue of the Hollywood Insider. Thank you all for showing an interest in my new career. Many of you have emailed wondering how things were going and when the first issue would be coming out so I figured this is as good a time as any to launch the inaugural email. Enjoy.

ACTING:

Those of you who know anything about the business know that there are considerable start up costs associated with launching an acting career. As I was basically acting as an investment banker for the last two years I figured I would just.....start acting. Not so. There are classes to be enrolled in - to get one's "chops", headshot photographs to be taken, agents to be signed with as well as an endless networking process. During the past six weeks I have tackled most of these with some degree of success and now I am poised to hit the big time!

Training: I enrolled in classes at the Herbert Berghof Studio in the West Village - Herb was some big time actor guy years ago.....I think he's dead now. It came recommended to me as the cheapest and most flexible of acting studios and so I thought it was a good place to start. I am taking an Improvisation Class, a Scene Study & Monologue class (basic acting technique) and a Singing Voice class. Improvisation, while tending towards comedy is supposedly great for dramatic actors as well. It helps them get over stage fright - which I don't really have a problem with. The improv class is by far the most entertaining. It allows me, nay, encourages me to act like a complete imbecile, which, as many of you know, I can do with some degree of facility. Encouragingly, after only three classes of basic improv the teacher suggested I move up to the advanced class. Said he "liked my work" and thought I could handle it. It is much like the basic class except that instead of 35 totally inhibited recent college grads, it is 10 veteran class clowns. Apparently we have a performance coming up in August at a local theater - something like Drew Carey's "Who's Line Is It Anyway". Oh boy, can't wait.

In my first singing class the male teacher was working mano a mano with an attractive female student. When she finished singing he said to her "you have a nice chest". Of course everyone else in the room knew that he was referring to her middle singing range or "chest voice", but what they heck did I know? I started giggling like a pre-pubescent schoolboy...."huh, huh....he said chest"...huh,huh..... yup, they love me in that class.

Headshots: These are an actor's calling card. The most important tool an actor has to get auditions.....Talent comes somewhere further down the list apparently. After an exhaustive search of over 15 photographers in NYC I settled on Tess Steinkolk to capture this future star in black and white glossies. This was a Herculean task I can assure you. There are one million and four headshot photographers in Manhattan all claiming to capture the true essence of the actor....whatever that means. "It's all in the eyes, man. All in the eyes". Apparently it's all in the drugs. It seemed like most of these

cats were sky high when I met with them. After four weeks I had whittled my list down to four; three females and one male. I mention this only because someone in the business advised me to choose a female photographer because you want a flirtatiousness to come out in the final product. I chose Tess not only on the basis of her gender, but also because she had been in the business the longest and was the only one on my list mentioned in "How To Be A Working Actor", my industry bible.

The day of the shoot I arrived at Tess' sun-drenched west side studio with about 10 wardrobe changes and my guitar for maximum pretentious actor cheese shots. Tess DK'ed the guitar immediately and got me dolled up in a tight fitting black t-shirt and faded jeans. She started trying to flirt with me to get the right expression on my face, but she is like 50 years old and pear shaped so all I could muster was an expression that said "gee, grandma, thanks for the wool socks". After I got over the initial discomfort I came into my own and started making love to the camera....not literally. But I got some great shots. Tess is well worth the money....and these photographers are not cheap. Of course, after choosing which shots to get enlarged into 8x10s, you need to take them to another place to do the retouching ("lets just get rid of these blemishes and soften your wrinkle lines a bit") and still another place to get them reproduced in mass quantities. This process adds further time and money to the endeavor. But at last, I have them and now I can get to work.

Agent: Many of you may not know that I was a child actor. Okay, not in the Drew Barrymore, Tatum O'Neil, Danny Bonaduce way, but I appeared in a handful of commercials and community theater productions during fifth and sixth grades. As it turns out, my manager from way back then, is now a successful TV, Film and Theater agent in Manhattan. I paid her a visit one day and after reminiscing and showing her my headshots she agreed to sign me - providing I take an auditioning course and build up my resume - which she will help out with. This is a major relief as it can be quite a daunting process to go it alone in this fickle industry. More to come on my agent (The Anne Steele Agency) in future Insiders.

WRITING:

I am enrolled in an online fiction writing course from the Gotham Writer's Workshop which I am enjoying immensely. I am learning to develop all the elements of fiction (plot, structure, setting, character, dialogue, etc.) through weekly lectures and assignments. There are 18 students in the class from all over the US and the world. We also get to critique each other's writing and have our own attempts at fiction examined by the group. I have begun a novel (working title "Shangri-La") about a convertible bond trader on assignment in Hong Kong who gets caught up in the drugs and sleaze of the "fragrant harbor". I think of it like "The Beach" meets "Rogue Trader".

MUSIC:

As some of you know I have performed with several bands over the course of my lifetime and recently I had hooked back up with my band from the ol' college days. They had been playing together (without me) under the name ZUZU (check them out on Garageband.com) on and off since graduation. Recently we played for our 10th year college reunion (yes, I'm that old) and I am hoping to get us some gigs in the big city

(that'd be New York for all of you out-of-towners). However, the band has taken a hiatus for the summer. More on that as it develops.

STUFF I'VE DONE: (hopefully this section will be more meaty in the next issue)

Acting:

"The Last Goodbye".

Independent short film about a corporate type who tells his wife he wants a divorce in front of all of his friends at an midtown bar. I played Bob Marcus, one of the protagonist's corporate pals. As the "featured extra" I got a line or two and several good shots of the back of my head. The director hopes to premiere the film at the Sundance Film Festival. Note of interest: one of the leads in this film plays the drummer in the new film "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" at theaters everywhere. Great film by the way. Kind of a cross between "Rocky Horror Picture Show" and "Precilla Queen of the Desert".

"Sweet Memories"

Independent full length film about two brothers - everything goes right for one and nothing goes right for the other. I played a "wedding guest" and appear in one scene. Even though I was an extra I was able to finagle my way into a few segments where I stand out. The film will be in postproduction for a while, but the director hopes that it will be ready for the Cannes Film Festival.

RUBBING ELBOWS WITH THE RICH & FAMOUS: (this section will mention any famous people I have come in contact with)

MARY STUART MASTERSON ("Some Kind of Wonderful", "Fried Green Tomatoes"). I had the chance to speak to her at the Stony Brook (Long Island) Independent Film Festival in July. As the only celeb there (she was promoting an indie film she starred in) she was in great demand and so we only chatted for a few minutes. After brandishing the de rigueur "gosh, I love your work!" comment I asked her for advice on whether to move to LA or stay in NYC. Her answer was to go to LA if I just want to "work", but stay in NYC if I want to develop a "craft". Hmmmm...the latter sounds a bit artsy to me....we'll see.

JOAN JETT (of Joan Jett and the Blackhearts fame...remember "I love rock and roll, put another dime in the jukebox baby"?). She was in "Sweet Memories" (see above) and I had the good fortune of sitting next to her at the wedding banquet scene for seven hours. She is a laugh riot. We got along like a house on fire, joking back and forth and whatnot. There was a photographer taking still shots throughout the day and he took a couple of Joan and I. I told her that I may be excited about those photos now, but someday she will be telling her friends that she was once in a movie with Dan Jahns and has the photos to prove it. She was like "yeah, okay, whatever preppie extra boy".

STATISTICS:

Days since becoming an "actor": 66

Number of Films: 2 (I'm being generous to myself here)

Number of TV shows: 0

Number of Theater shows: 0

Website Hits: 0 (the Dan Jahns website is in the works - this is a must to complete the pretentious actor persona)

Mood Meter: Very High. So far the people I have come in contact with (agents, photographers, etc.) have it in their best interests to build up my confidence and so far its working. I'm sure I will be on soaps or prime time TV in no time.

I promise future issues will be shorter in length. Hopefully the next issue will be exclusively show, films and productions I've been in. Again, wish me luck...or a broken leg or whatever actors wish for.