

Hollywood Discovery  
Why I love Hollywood  
by Jason Stuart

I grew up in the Fairfax area of Los Angeles near the old me company on Wilshire and Fairfax. I wanted to be in show business as far back as I could remember, but had no connections what so ever in my family. When I was probably 19 years old I went into Schwab's drug store on Sunset Boulevard, which is where Trader Joe's and Sundance movie theater is now. Schwab's was a drugstore that have a coffee shop actually in it. I thought of course that I was going to be discovered there and had to go. Everybody would go there for breakfast and lunch. All the out of work actors, famous not so famous were there to hang out and share who was casting what or who directing the next big film. There was no internet and it was a very different time so had to actually talk to people.

In the 80s Schwab's was the place to be. If a table had three people at it and it was for four, the waitress's would always put someone there. No matter who was at the table. It was always very busy. I went in one day for lunch hoping to be discovered as usual. I was put at the table with two time Academy award winner Shelley Winters and Sally Kirkland before she was Oscar nominated for "Anna". Sally wasn't anybody yet but had been in two movies with Barbra Streisand and "The Sting" Redford and Newman. So that was enough for me to be really thrilled to be seated at their table. Also at the table was Skip E. Lowe a popular local cable talk show host who looked like a lesbian leprechaun. He later wrote a book called "The Boy With The Betty Grable legs". Years later he would call me on the phone and give me all sorts of gossip of what was going on in Hollywood weather I wanted to hear it or not!

So I'm sitting there with Shelly Winters and I could barely catch my breath I was so excited. I sat there for 10 minutes and no one said a word to me. All three were deep in conversation about this Gena Rolands new film. Shelley finally looks at me and says, "So who are you?" I said, well my name is Stuart Greif". Shelley barked back at me "Stuart what?". I could barely get ay words out of mouth. I said, "Well,... yes... Stuart Ted Greif". She said, in I

know Hollywood kinda way “that’s a stupid name for a cute kid”. No one famous ever said anything to me much less that I was cute. Sally was sitting there eating a piece of American cheese and listening to Shelly like she was the queen of the country and said “I agree”. Skippy talking with this mouthful so I couldn’t understand a thing he said. All I could hear was he repeated cute kid. I felt like I had been discovered that Schwab’s by a movie star! .

Shelley was very kind to be invited me to be observer the actors studio, Martin Landau, Lee Grant and even Lee Strasberg himself moderated the sessions that I went to for over a year. I think she understood that I needed a few kind words and let me watch some of the most brilliant actors work. A few months later I got my first job on a nighttime comedy soap opera called “L.A.T.E.R” starring Renne Temple and Billy Barty. As I watch the show credits appeared at the end, mine read Stuart Grief. And the memories of the bullies calling at me good grief it’s Greif were still fresh in mind. As was that lunch with Shelly Winters. That next day I change my name to Jason Stuart.

So I guess I change my name because Shelley Winters told me to and that’s why love Hollywood.