

WOW.

Went to another pitchfest over the weekend and I have to say: Worst. Pitches. Ever.

There were literally a new higher breed of fucktards there. One woman, both in her pitch and her synopsis, referred to a character as a “woman of color.” And, I shit you not, leaned in a little when she said it.

One guy sat down and said: “So. You like spaceships?” And then proceeded to wait for an answer. Upon getting one, he said “what about space ships that can travel far.”

Seriously... buddy... is there a story here anywhere?

Another guy sat down. Told us he’s got money. He’s got locations. He’s got a director. He even has James Franco interested in playing the lead. All he needed was a co-producer to bring in additional financing to complete the project.

I leaned in and asked: “Do you have a story attached?”

He had spent four minutes telling me about all of the things he had and never once even mentioned a title!

I ripped one guy a new asshole because he sat down and said “what are you guys looking for? Okay, what about a thriller...no, you wouldn’t be interested in that. In fact, you probably wouldn’t be interested in anything that I have.”

It was clear that he had already visited several tables and had been rejected. Frustrated he decided to sit down and just shoot himself in the foot before he even pitched ANYTHING.

I fucking went nuts.

“Just pitch us something. Anything. I don’t fucking care what it is. Just pitch me a story. Any story. I don’t fucking care what happened to you at any other tables, I don’t care that they passed. That’s them. Not me! Now you’re bringing all of this negativity to my table and I don’t fucking want to hear it. If this is the attitude you’re going to bring, then just go home... because you’ve already ruled yourself out.”

After 4 minutes of whining and not pitching anything, and 30 seconds of me ripping him a new one, he tried to give me his list of scripts. Told him I didn’t want it. I can’t work with people like that.

Sigh.

I just don’t know what you people want. What are you expecting? It frustrates me to no end that YOU actually think that acting this way will sell me on your idea.

Okay, enough about that. Let's move on to the mail bag... it's been awhile and I've had some really great questions submitted. So here we go...

Justin writes:

I was interested in this week's column as you mentioned a friend in New Zealand, where I'm also from. I totally accept what you're saying is right, that if you want a serious career in Hollywood you should move to LA. I've read this in many places from the people in the know so I don't doubt it.

I have a follow up question though.. If you're primarily a writer of spec scripts (which I am) as opposed to going up for OWA's, is it a little different? I mean, obviously you'd have to be willing to come to LA for meetings, but if the spec is already done and they want it, would they still be prepared (possibly) to deal with you?

In February I won the Kairos Prize screenwriting competition and was flown to LA, put up in the Universal Hilton and went to the awards dinner, made a speech in front of industry players etc, the whole nine yards... there was good prize money involved but the main benefit was that my script was guaranteed a read by 50 to 60 studio execs. So now I'm waiting on their responses...

I have 8 other spec scripts lined up ready to go. So in my situation, assuming the scripts are good/desirable to them, do you think studio execs would be prepared to deal with a person like me if I was willing to make regular trips to LA, or would it just be in the 'too hard' basket for them?

Okay, so the simple answer is this... no, they won't want to deal with you. It's no joke, they really can't deal with people who aren't 5 minutes away.

Let's say, hypothetically that someone DOES buy your spec... doesn't mean SHIT. There will be notes. There will be re-writes. You're going to get fired off your own script. Maybe re-hired if you're lucky.

That's just how shit works and you can't be in New Zealand for this process. Mostly because this process could take YEARS.

SO, that being said... if you want to do this... then maybe time to make the move.

Hope that helps...

Francis wrote in and asked...

I pitched a script to a company and they asked for it. My question to you is this. How long does it usually take for them to get back to you, if they ever are going to? I'll never ever

ask them about it, but I was just wondering. It's been a week already. I still plan on pitching to whomever I can.

Thank you in advance...

A week? HA! Some companies I've sent my script to, well, let's see...it's been 3 months. Don't expect ANYTHING. Ever. In fact just assume that you're never going to hear from them ever and move on to the next company. It doesn't do you any good to sit around wondering when they are going to call.

Let me put it this way. You meet a girl at the bar and you give her your number...she says that she'll call...do you go home and sit by the phone and wait for it to ring? (if you answer yes to this, you probably have some serious issues and should talk to someone)

Just move on. That is the best thing you can do for your own mental health.

Al wanted to write in and ask:

At a future Pitchfest you're sitting at, I walk up for my turn and the first thing you see is this "older" guy, gray hair and all, approach your desk. Now, say, I present a decent pitch with a decent concept, good enough, say, to arouse your interest, and had I been much younger, you might even be tempted to ask to send you the script.

But... We all know full well of ageism in Hollywood. probably something you'd hoped you wouldn't have to deal with, irrespective of your own personal feelings on the issue.

So, the question. How would you deal with it? You could just say, "Thanks for coming and for providing the logline and one pager. Best of luck." And drop it there.

I mean, face it, Manny. You guys have to play by their rules, and by their customs, and not rock the boat. All understandable. You may think however much you liked the pitch, how the hell could you move it up? The boss might think you're nuts. All, too, understandable.

But, I would appreciate a reply, between you and me only, no one else will ever know. "Cross my heart and hope to die."

I'll answer from my viewpoint and my viewpoint alone. The whole ageism thing is bullshit. A good story is a good story no matter what. I wouldn't care... but let's face facts... I have to sell the writer and trying to sell a script from an older writer is damn hard to sell. Maybe a producer would be polite enough to hear the pitch, but would probably ultimately pass. And yeah, it's not supposed to be like that, but it is.

Honestly, it's not just the seniors either. I'm 33 years old. I've JUST started my career... I think sometimes, I'M too old because I'm not Tarantino who sold at like 21. Or P.T. Anderson who sold Boogie Nights at 24. Everybody wants the new hot "up and comer" and unfortunately, that

title is usually reserved for the 20-somethings.

Does it mean you should get out of the game? No. Not necessarily... but you definitely have to find a secret back door in.

Well there you go folks. Another week, another column. Remember to come and say hi at the 15th Annual Hollywood Pitch Festival this Saturday from 4-6. If you haven't gotten tickets yet, go to <http://hollywoodpitchfestival.com/> and use promo code **Manny888** to save \$25.

Till next week...