

So I learned a very valuable lesson after last week's column. Never ask a writer why they want to be a writer.

Why?

Cause ya all are a bunch of long winded mother fuckers!

Kidding. So thank you, to everyone that sent in their story. I want to share a few of them with you, but first I want to toss my two cents into the ring.

Before I do I just want to say this:

To each their own.

I get it. Success is defined differently to everyone thus the "dream" often varies. The one thing I did notice, was once you cut through all of the long winded bullshit, we all pretty much have the same desire.

The desire to tell stories, entertain and escape.

For me, I never wanted to change the world. Fuck the world. I never wanted to make documentaries or shed some light on some shitty thing that's happening in the asshole of the planet.

I get it. We're all doomed. Hasa Diga Eebowai. (props to you Book of Mormon fans for getting that one.)

Movies have always been a way for me to escape the shittiness of life. I want to explore. Go to different worlds. See some cool action. Laugh out loud.

And I wanted to provide that for others. (AUTHOR'S NOTE: Don't think the irony of wanting to entertain the very people I loathe is lost on me. It's not.)

But it's not enough for me to get some straight to DVD movie made. I don't want that. I want more. I want to be the guy. I want to be the there, opening weekend, seeing my shit on the screen of a packed movie house.

I want to be the guy Warner Bros. entrusts rebooting Batman with.

The guy who gets studio deals and can afford the house in Malibu but chooses to live in the Venice Canals cause it's "cooler."

A quick side story that would greatly explain what I'm trying to say. I was checking out Morgan Spurlock's new series exclusively on Hulu, A Day in the Life Of. (Totally check it out, it's pretty interesting.)

The first episode went into a Day in the Life of Richard Branson. He was flying from London to Chicago to promote Virgin Airlines. Cameras were interviewing his staff waiting for him in Chi-town. Now, keep in mind these are high executives in his organization and they probably feel that working for him and Virgin has brought them a great deal of success. I was watching and started thinking...

I'm just not wired that way...I don't want to work for the guy, I want to be the guy. I don't want to be Vice President, give me the launch codes! Follow me?

I want to be the screenwriter who breaks the mold and is actually sent out to promote shit. Actors and Directors always get to do Kimmel. Fuck that, if it wasn't for me they wouldn't have anything!

And seriously, if Kim Kardashian and Snooki can regularly hit the late night talk show circuit, a writer sure as fuck can.

The last screenwriter that SORT of broke that line was Diablo Cody...and I loved her for that. Problem was, she did it because she used to be a stripper and that was interesting. From the Pole to Oscar Gold: The Diablo Cody Story.

I want to be good enough at what I do that people want to work with me. And I want to be successful enough to NOT have to work with anyone I don't want to.

It is possible to accomplish this in this town, it just takes serious dedication to the craft.

Screenwriting isn't a hobby for me like for some of you. This is literally what I chose to do as a job. It isn't "on the side" or once a year or just on the weekends.

I do it every day in some way, shape or form.

Now, having said that...I want you to understand. THAT'S ME. That's what I have chosen. If you're the weekend warrior that wants to get a straight to DVD sequel made and be able to tell your friends that you wrote a movie that got made and stars Lorenzo Lamas in it?

Cool. You go do that. THAT is good enough for you, so it's good enough for me.

But I'm always going to yell at you to try to aim a little higher.

It's just what I do...you don't have to listen to me when I do it.

Cool?

Cool.

Now, enough about me...here are some of the responses you sent in:

Laurie wrote:

*To answer your question, my dream is to sell or option every script I write and to make enough money doing so that I don't have to have all the other "day jobs" that I have now. I'd like to spend my life focusing only on creating art and doing charitable works. I don't think that's asking for a lot, do you?*

Nope. Not at all, Laurie. Day jobs suck.

Fred writes in and says:

*We all know our chances at screenwriting success are similar to winning the lottery. But then we sit in a theater and know our work is better than the junk we just paid good money to yawn through. It would be nice to achieve fame and fortune by doing something that helps enhance the lives of other people all over the world. Few occupations reward their heroes as well as Hollywood, which has more awards than country music!*

The “enhancement” argument is tough. Do movies REALLY enhance our lives...REALLY? Maybe they do for some people, they did for me and continue to do so, but I’m a movie nerd. I’m not one of the masses. But I get what you’re saying Fred. This is your way of offering escape. Which, for a lot of people, totally enhances their lives.

Ron wrote:

*Why I write? Actually, writing is the issue. I'm lazy when it comes to writing. I just want to tell a story. I have note books full of them and I outline the entire story but that's where I stop. Laziness. I admit it and wish I could change it. I wish I had a ghost writer, gave them the outline, and let them run with it. I don't want fame, hate being around people cuz they mostly suck, make just enough money to pay off the bills, and live comfortably enough with the ability to donate to St. Jude's and animals. Not exciting or ambitious but just how it is. I don't need to change the world or have the greatest screenplay ever written.*

After a slow tangent into writing novels, Ron came back with this...

*After this long email and probably some eye rolling on your part or maybe that was me eye rolling, I just want to see a book on the shelves at Barnes and Noble and a screenplay made into a SYFY movie.*

Ron. No eye rolling sir...I would have done that if I thought you were full of shit. You're not full of shit. You know what you want. Just to get by comfortably by doing something that makes you happy.

You're not the only SYFY wannabe writer...

One of my favorite submissions came from Thomas, who wrote this:

*I am a Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and screen writing is a hobby: I have no interest in "making it" in Hollywood as a pro; what I am aiming at is selling a sci-fi script to a TV anthology type show or feature (e.g, Syfy channel MOW, Twilight Zone/Amazing stories equivalent). I write because I see the movie in my head and cannot avoid putting it down. I have in my contract that I take the Month of August off, go to Vermont, haul out Final Draft and write; seven screenplays so far, no sales; I am entering them in contests and getting feedback so that I think I am slowly improving. Fortunately the writing itself is the fun, so that "no sales so far" is not a deterrent.*

Now as far as day jobs go, you gotta give it up to Thomas and I apologize ahead of time, but I'm gonna poke fun at you a little bit Thomas...

Did I not tell you that EVERYONE wants to be a screenwriter? This fucking dude has a job. A GOOD job...he's not an accountant, he's not a mailman...he's a fucking head shrinker at HARVARD. Harvard people! And yet, he wants to be a screenwriter...for SYFY.

Okay, okay...kinda had that coming to ya Thomas, so now here's the flip-side. How awesome is that? Dude loves writing movies so much that its in his CONTRACT. Gotta say that's pretty impressive.

Kari's submission is closest to how I feel:

*It's easy for me - I just love movies. I love everything about movies. I love to walk into a theatre and sit down and disappear from my crazy life for two hours. I love to see places I've never been. Live vicariously through the characters having experiences I'll never have. I love that movies make me laugh, cry, root for the underdog, scream out loud, and jump a mile. And to be able to write scripts that may one day be up on the big screen is thrilling to me. I've done so many jobs in my life, but writing is the one thing that has given me the greatest joy. Always, when I finish a first draft of a script - I cry. I don't know why - but I do. I think it's because I realize what a gift it is to be able to create something from nothing. To visualize and then put words on paper and create*

*an entire world that came from my imagination - from me. Powerful stuff and I have no intention of slowing down. I started writing three years ago and I have 5 scripts under my belt - I'm starting this weekend on my 6th one. I write because I love it. Here's to making our dreams come true.*

Okay, except the crying. There's no crying in screenwriting Kari. Man up. ;)

I also threw this out to some of my screenwriting buddies and here's what they had to say...

Adam wrote:

*Why, now, do I want to be a screenwriter? Because I can't make a living at anything that I don't care about. May as well strive to make a living at something I DO care about. I don't need an Oscar. I don't need any awards. I just need to be able to talk about what I do for a living, and I can't do that with any day job I had in the past or present.*

Totally agree...although...kinda want the Oscar. Not going to lie.

Scott hit me up on FaceBook with:

*I can't see myself doing anything else in this world. Never have, never will. Now I just have to learn how. :)*

Hmmm...yeah, the learning part is kinda key!

My good friend Debra (who is an awesome screenwriter in her own right) told me:

*I want to move and excite people with my stories and bring that awe factor across their eyes!*

Here here, Deb.

So yeah, there you go. It's obvious that we all do it because we have to. And although we have different ideas of the "dream" the foundation is all the same.

Bottomline: We're all fucktards for going down this crazy road.

Till next week...