

“My life in Manhattan’s Upper East Side was pretty posh. For the most part I lived on Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick’s balcony; but whenever they were away doing whatever it is that the rich and famous do I slipped into the apartment and made myself comfortable.”

# DON'T BITE MY HEAD OFF

Story By Andrew Scott Brooks  
Photography By Don Ellis

On any given day you could find me watching The Discovery Channel in high definition on the plasma television or sipping a Starbucks cappuccino from a cup that once touched Miss Sarah Jessica’s lips. I even once invited over a few females to hang with me but even the good things in life left them catching a mood and wanting to bite my head off. Needless to say, they had to go.

After a while it became a little monotonous living off the spoils of my famous hosts. That’s as if sleeping on a Himalayan Trillium and eating take out from The Four Season’s could ever get boring. After a normal day of checking my email, or Matthew’s email if you want to be picky, a script arrived in a PDF from Mel Brooks. It was less than original to say the least. It was a stage musical that had been adapted from a movie comedy.

I figured somebody had to have written it and if they can do it, I can do it too. I sat down at the computer and after three days of inspired typing I had clicked out my first screenplay. There were no illusions of grandeur here. I didn’t expect to write a Hollywood blockbuster on my first attempt so I started by writing a script for a small television show

I enjoyed watching called *CSI*. I sold it in forty-five minutes. It seems as though sending a script from Matthew’s email address with his glowing endorsement opens doors. The episode turned out to be *CSI*’s highest rated episode to date. If you ever wondered where the character named Grissom got his fascination with insects, well, look no further than yours truly.

Offers came pouring in and luckily Matthew was on location shooting *Godzilla II* or something and Miss Sarah Jessica was busy filming *Sex and the City* so I had the computer all to myself. Over the next eighteen months I stayed busy. I wrote two episodes of *Friends*, an Episode of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, and the season four finale of *The Sopranos*.

My first movie script was for *Rush Hour 2*. I was sick for weeks because I felt like I had sold out by doing a sequel. I couldn’t eat. I couldn’t sleep. You know, all the cliché depression symptoms. I took to spending my time on the balcony again.

From my self imposed banishment point I could just barely see Broadway out over Central Park. I watched as people hustled in and out of the theaters. I even took to watching Matthew slip in the back to star in *The Producers*. I could see *The Lion King* and *Rent* and *Cats*. But one little play caught my attention.

The people would go in happy and leave angry. For weeks I struggled to motivate myself to go and see this play that was stringing me on and teasing me with its depression era billboards. I finally took the leap and slipped in to see an afternoon rehearsal. Twenty minutes into it and I knew I was going to turn this play into a movie. The process had worked for Mel Brooks and Matthew with *The Producers* so I figured I could reverse engineer it and make a movie from a play. >>>



Hard at work writing my script



Waiting on Miss Sarah Jessica's clock



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Three weeks later I had completed the screenplay for the movie version of the Broadway play, *Chicago*. My agent at CAA sold my script in eleven hours for three million dollars. I couldn't even do the math to figure out just how many crickets I could buy with that much money. Even better, my creative levies gave way to a flood of script ideas. I wrote six movie scripts while *Chicago* was filming. Five were made into hundred million dollar movies. The sixth got lost in the shuffle when the Weinstens sold Miramax to Disney but I hear that Matt Damon has optioned it.

Anyway, I was watching Matthew and Miss Sarah Jessica argue over what croutons go in a spinach salad when the doorbell rang. My agent had flown in unannounced from Los Angeles to tell me in person that *Chicago* was up for thirteen Academy Awards including Best Adapted Screenplay.

I stood motionless as I watched the scene unfold. There was a discussion followed by an argument. Miss Sarah Jessica stormed out of the apartment. Matthew and my agent sat down at the computer. My hidden folder was discovered. Phone calls were made. I'm pretty sure I saw a tear roll down Matthew's cheek when he opened my digital headshot. My agent threw his Blackberry into the salad bowl and walked out of the apartment leaving his cashmere jacket lying in the floor.

My writing career had ended. The bug man came to spray the apartment not fifteen minutes after Miss Sarah Jessica returned. It didn't matter how many emails I had sent from my own email accounts, my agent never even acknowledged them. I was homeless and out of work.

So here I am at *Showcase Magazine* in Virginia. I took a position at the only place in the world that would hire me and I'm writing ad copy of all things. It's miserable. The ladies won't even look at me much less try to bite my head off. But it's a start. Oh and by the way, somebody put a bug in somebody's ear at the Academy. I did not win the Oscar. To top it off, apparently Matthew found my facetious script on his computer for a movie version of the stage version of the movie *The Producers* and it was turned into a movie last year. Figures. ■



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Hanging out on Mr. Broderick's sunglasses

## About Me

Although named from the look of being in "prayer," the Praying Mantis is more aptly named *Preying* Mantis as it is a violent predator that preys on any unsuspecting insect that crosses its path. It seems as though the average person only knows that the Praying Mantis female kills and eats the male during mating. Fortunately for the male mantis, this is a belief that has been partially disproven over the last twenty years.

During early research in captivity, the females did often kill the males and eat them, but it was due to a voracious appetite during the mating season that is fulfilled in the wild without eating the male. In a natural setting, this type of behavior is very rare and occurs between 5% and 31% of the time. Mantis religiosa also known as the European Mantis is the one species, out of the approximately 2,000 known varieties, where it is necessary for the female to remove the head of the male for the mating process to work properly.

What isn't widely known is that the Praying Mantis has excellent chameleon-like skills to change colors and blend into its surroundings. Praying Mantis' have been known to even change their skin color to black over a few days in order to blend into an area ravaged by fire. This skill is an excellent help in stalking prey and allows the Praying Mantis to wait in ambush for its next meal to come close enough to attack it. Unfortunately for the prey, that isn't really all that close as the Praying Mantis is so quick that the naked eye will miss the attack.

A Praying Mantis is such an efficient predator that even hummingbirds are not safe in a Praying Mantis' range. Despite their ominous look, Praying Mantis' are not dangerous to humans and are often quite a helpful insect to have in your own garden as they help control the insect population.

## Name, Praying Mantid Phylum, Arthropoda Class, Insecta Order, Mantodea

