

BLOGSTAGE: Backstage West

Oscars Aren't Everything



Since the day I started acting in junior high, I've been waiting for my big break. After working in the industry for over 10 years, I can't complain too much. I have acted alongside some Hollywood greats -- like Halle Berry, Mark Wahlberg, and Debbie Reynolds -- and have racked up credits on shows such as Charmed, NYPD Blue, and The Bold and the Beautiful, to name a few.

I hadn't thought my big break would come in the form of a short film, but when a short I starred in, *West Bank Story*, won the 2006 Oscar for best short, I couldn't help hoping that my time had come. After the film won, a million thoughts ran through my head: I was going to be the Leonardo DiCaprio of the Middle East, the King of the Castle, the Big Cheese, and the Next Big Thing. It was only a matter of time before Tom Cruise and I were lunching together at the Ivy!

Not to toot my own horn, but *West Bank* isn't "just a short film," either. It's a 22-minute musical-comedy gem -- the same length as a half-hour TV episode. The characters are fully developed and my acting ability is definitely showcased. Some actors got their big breaks after briefly appearing in Oscar-winning feature films: Siobhan Fallon and Sam Anderson in *Forrest Gump* and Shaun Toub in *Crash*, for

example. Surely my leading role in an Oscar-winning short film would lead to my big break.

As the buzz from the Oscars slowly died down, I waited for news from my agent and manager about my next big project. I decided that any offer from Spielberg would do, or if Jack Nicholson wanted me to be his wingman, I could manage that. But days passed, then weeks, and even months went by. I still had not landed a quality meeting with a major agency, and no one was offering me roles on a hot, new TV series. Not even a feature film was in my sights. I did receive press from my publicist, who got my name out there, and I have garnered respect from my peers since the Academy Awards, but other than that, zilch. I had to wonder, What went wrong?

When I ask myself, "What do I want out of this career, this dream that I have had for years?" the answer is simple: I want my talent to be recognized. I want to have the opportunity to be in epic films or TV shows. And maybe I want to be known for my dashing good looks -- at least that is what my wife says, and yes, she is a kind woman. [Westbank_2](#)

As for now, I am on hold for a small role in an Adam Sandler film and will be shooting a larger role in a comedy-horror film at the end of the year. To keep my creative juices flowing during a little downtime, I directed a short film that will be hitting the festival circuit soon, but acting is still my artistic passion and true calling. I love the challenges, I love having the ability to express my thoughts and actions within a specific character, and that love is what keeps me going in this business.

I still believe that I will get my big break, and that someday someone will realize how much I have to contribute to this industry where dreams come true.

-- Joey Naber

Joey Naber's film credits include 'Mother', 'Executive Decision', 'The Siege', and 'Three Kings'. He has guest-starred on 'Las Vegas', 'ER', and 'JAG', among other shows. For more information, visit www.joeynaber.com.

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