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Lisa Hammer

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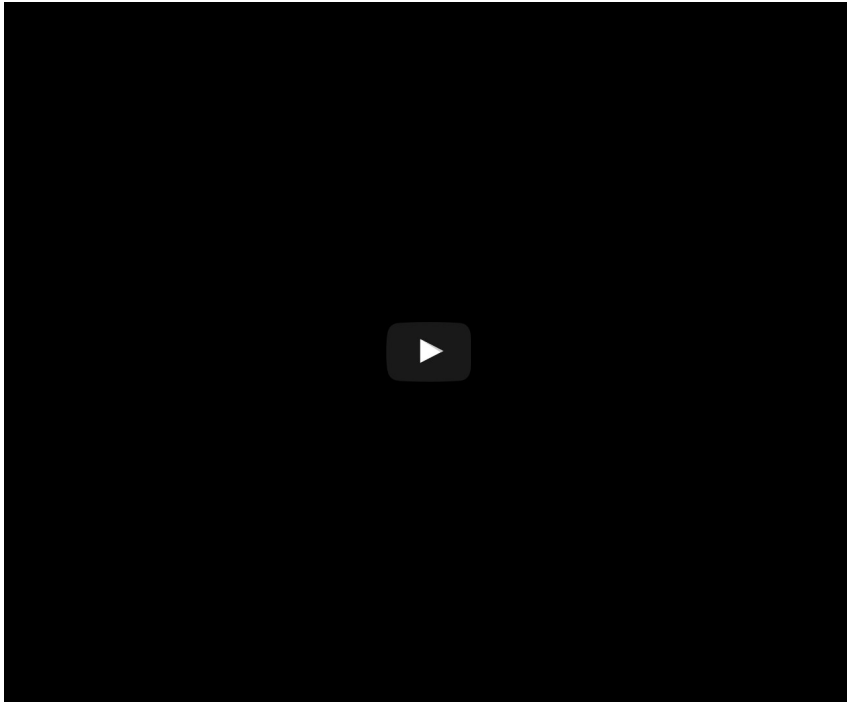
I had the pleasure of speaking with the lovely and talented Lisa Hammer while she was in town working on the "SLC Punk" sequel "Punk's Dead." We spoke about her career in music, movies, and television, shock humor, the healing power of laughter, and child shark hunters, among other things. You can find Lisa on Twitter at [@LadyLisaTerror](#), on Facebook at "[The Sisters Plotz](#)," and at [lisahammer.com](#)

I know that you've done a handful of films in the past, "Pus\$bucket" I watched the trailer for, that looked like a lot of fun. Is there somewhere that people can get a hold of that?

You know what, these kids, they're like these young hipster kids in the middle of Indianapolis called "Briarwood Entertainment" came to me, I get a lot of requests to re-release it, but these kids really seemed to have something going on. They have a guy, he's like 20 something, he wears this 70's mustache, and he hosts his own, almost like a green screen cheesy 70's show with crazy VHS tapes that I own and he talks about them as if he has a cable access show and he uses that on the web. Awesome, awesome kids and they said "We want to put it out, we want to make t-shirts." They made little buckets with puss coming out. There's a line in the movie that's "Kill for Jesus" and so they made t-shirts that have a giant logo that say "Kill for Jesus" and I'm just waiting for the fallout on that one.

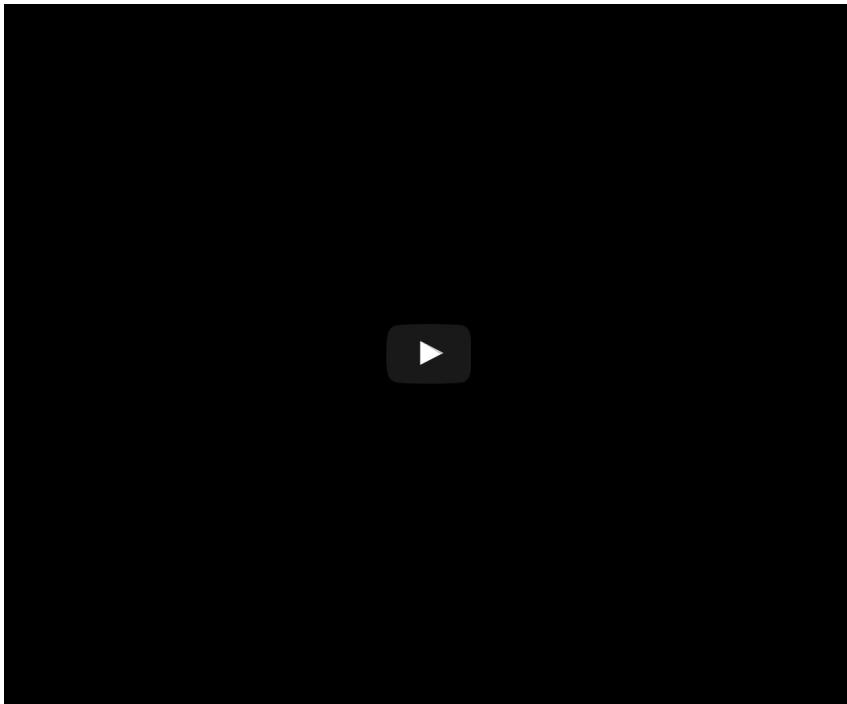
Right, the first assault?

Ya... David Movrin, look him up on YouTube, he's introducing the film, I made a director's cut for DVD and they wanted the pristine, entire, almost 2 hour version on VHS to put back out. I guess there are collectors of VHS, so I'm so impressed by these kids I'm really happy, that's probably going to come out in a few months.



Excellent, we'll keep an eye out for that. I know that you're in town working on "Punk's Dead" I wondered if there are any other films that you have in the chute.

Funny you should ask, I have this thing right here. Basically the feature I'm editing for myself right now with my husband Levi and some incredible actresses called "The Sisters Plotz." Plotz is a Yiddish word meaning your head is exploding with emotion and joy. So "The Sisters Plotz" is a really joyous kind of a John Waters meets Ray Garden's kind of 1940's musical shenanigans freakshow. We have an incredible composer Mary Finezinger who is an award winning BMI composer and the author of the script. Lisa Ferber is an absolute genius, it started from a play that she wrote that we were in. She has this kind of Oscar Wilde dialogue, it's genius. We turned it into a feature film, we shot it with our own money over a few years. We even got a crane shot in Central Park and a pie fight. We have Eve Plump from "The Brady Bunch" she's one of the sisters and we have some actors from "Boardwalk Empire" and "All My Children" so if you look it up, it's "The Sisters Plotz" it's on Facebook and, news coming on that one. I'm about 80% done with that one.



“Pox” was released, it’s a sort of gay satanic talk show host that’s abducted by an inept cult and that’s a feature film that was a cable access show in New York City, we shot it in our apartment with velvet curtains and tin foil sets and it did really well. I know cable access you can’t really judge ratings, but we got a lot of hate mail, so we know we did well. “Pox” was release by TLA video, fine purveyors of gay/lesbian films, I’m very proud of that. That’s out there now too.

Then we did a film called “[The Invisible Life of Thomas Lynch](#)” which is, Levi (Wilson) and James (Merendino) and I play, sort of like “Man Bites Dog,” we play a film crew following a hit man on his daily routine. So in one shot he’ll be blowing someone’s head off, in the next shot he’ll be taking care of his grandmother. It’s hilarious. And that’s available at Walmart.com believe it or not, they have no idea what they’re releasing. They have no idea what’s in it, it’s so gory.

As far as “Punk’s Dead” I’m sure you’re under lock and key, is there anything that you can tell us?

I can tell you right now that this cast and crew have bonded so deeply that our hearts are being torn out right now because people have to leave, we’re done. Just a wonderful labor of love, an experience of a lifetime. Anyone who was involved, even just the extras who came for the punk scene and the goth scene, they could tell that there was something so special about what’s happening. I can’t wait for you guys to see it because the story is so touching, so wonderful, it’s going to touch everyone’s heart. Punk, goth, parents... kids, it touches all kinds of subjects. You’ll have to see it to see if you can see Heroin Bob again maybe.

It’s exciting to see what some of those characters have turned into and the next generation. There’s always a next generation, so where do you fit in when you were on the scene but now you’re older and you’re doing something else. I’m kind of going through that in New York City. We’re putting a story together called “Maybe Sunshine” which is a web series based around my band “[Radiana](#)” but it’s going to be a comedy because it’s me at 40 something trying to get into the costume again, get on stage and compete with 20 year old stick figure gorgeous trust fund kids form Williamsburg. I’m just so unhip and their so hip, I can’t even tell what they’re tweeting and twerking, I don’t even know. How am I going to be relevant.

How much of that is fictionalized and how much is it based on your experience?

It's all true. We're bringing back, I had a midget manager from "[Mors Sypilitica](#)," so we're going to bring that character back and he did some crazy stuff and got into fights with club owners and it was a crazy scene so we'll be touching on that.

Speaking of that, it definitely seems like a lot of what you're working on is pushing shock boundaries and strange or unusual storytelling. I'm curious with "Venture Bros" what your experience was working with a bigger corporate entity like Cartoon Network versus the independent stuff where you probably have a bit more creative freedom.

Their snack bar is a lot bigger than mine. It's pretty impressive, I've gotta say. They've got really good craft services, they have like five kinds of cereal instead of just the one kind.

So there are some perks.

There are definite perks, it's pretty cool.

Was voice acting something that you always wanted to do or did you fall into that?

I fell into it. I was married to Doc for a very long time and when he started the show, we didn't know how big it was going to get so I just sort of helped out in different voices like the prostitute, and the LeslieBots, and then Triana and that sort of stuck. Because I identified with her so much when I was that age, I looked just like that and I was into "Adam and the Ants" and I did collect giant grandma thunder pants so I could identify with her the most and it just kept going. They kept thinking they weren't going to do another season, then another season would come, and it's been an amazing ride. They are absolutely genius artists, Doc and Jackson Publick, they are that funny 24 hours a day in real life. They are amazing.

Was the character of Triana modelled after you?

I have no idea, it seems, I identify with her like I said. It could be, I don't know what was in their mind when they were writing it but I'm so happy they did because that is exactly how I was, I can totally identify with it.

You have varied talents: filmmaker, musician, acting, voice acting. Is there something you prefer doing more than others?

Oh sure, I never really cared to be an actor or voice actor, I just kind of fell into it but I'm naturally a ham. What I really love most in the world is making people laugh, if there is any way I can do that. I love singing, I love making music and writing lyrics, I want to do that for the rest of my life. I love directing and editing and writing crazy weird funny stuff. As long as it's funny I'm happy. When I was younger I had so much more angst, so I was making these dark German expressionist film fairy tales and everyone was slitting their throats and jumping off cliffs. But when I was making it I was kind of laughing, I was like "Oh this is so dark, I feel so dark inside I have to get it out." I'm a little bit calmer now, comedy is such a great way to alleviate your pain and your anger and your stress.

There's nothing more pure than a good laugh.

It's so good for you and if I can help people come out of their misery and just laugh, it heals you, then I'm happy.

Are there any other endeavors, creative or otherwise, that you haven't had a chance to dabble in, that you'd like to try.

I was thinking about shark wrangling but I'm too afraid, I don't know. I think I'm going to skip it.

If you hit them in the nose I think...

What is that tonic thing you can do? Shark tonic. I think you like tip them... my Mom did it. Oh my god, my Mom and her sisters and brother when they were young, my grandfather owned part of the Elbow Cay in the Bahamas and they as kids to clear out the sharks for people to swim, he would make them go out in the middle of the night and shark hunt to kill the sharks so that tourists could come and use the beach, his kids. So anyway...

Nothing gives you more street cred than shark hunting.

Ya, my Mom's tough, she's a tough lady, did I answer the question at all. Oh tonic, I think it's where you turn over the shark and you sort of, they become hypnotized when they're turned upside down. I mean, they'll drown so you have to be careful... or not, if you hate them. But they're sharks, so screw 'em.

They're like the cats of the sea, they just want belly rubs.

I think they're the assholes of the sea.

They're nothing but teeth and stomachs.

And the thing is they're not being malicious, they're not out to get you, they just want lunch. So I can't blame them.

Well you're stepping into the food chain when you walk into the ocean.

Exactly, I don't go into the ocean very often, there are terrible things in there.

I love it so much but it does feel like you're walking into a world of monsters.

You are. You can't see them. They found a carcass of a Great White Shark that was eaten by a larger shark, they basically found something that was eaten by Megalodon.

You're not safe even when you're king of the ocean.

No, you're not, you're somebody else's lunch.

There's always something bigger and scarier.

You know what, everyone should keep that in mind, there is always something bigger and scarier than you.

That's why we have to create humor so we can forget about the monsters at our door.

Until you die, and then who knows.

Who knows, indeed. Since we're in a comic book store I was curious if you read comics, and what your favorite comics are, if so.

I don't really read comics and that's a shame because they're amazing. They can wrap up a story in so few pages, I'm so envious of the writing, it's incredible. I think I remember reading "Elf Quest" in the 80s. I love "Elf Quest" when I was young I would read a lot, like "Archie" and "Casper" and stuff like that but I don't

have time in my life, but I really admire comics writers and artists, there's so much talent out there. You walk into the store and your mind is blown, like how do you even know what to pick out?

My husband Levi has a story that I would like to see made into a comic book so I think we might be dabbling in that at some point and maybe making an animation out of it.

Back to “Venture Bros,” when you play Triana, do you have to get into her head space or are you just sort of being yourself?

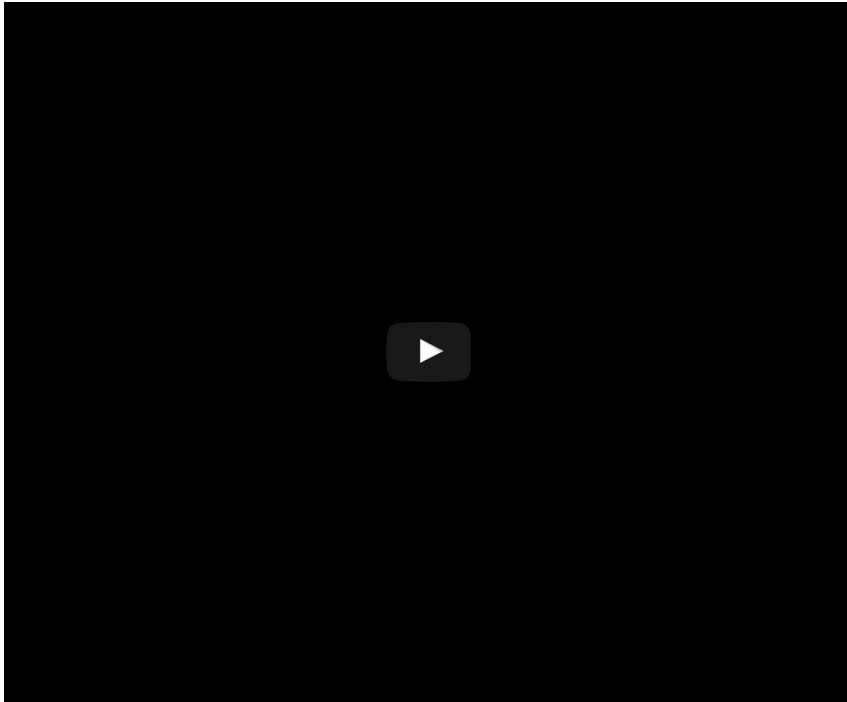
I have to remember how I was at that point, basically my most useful tool as an actor is called “A moment before” so you try to put yourself in the mindset of that person and think what did she just do right before this scene that's not written into the script, where was she? What was she doing? Was she listening to “Adam and the Ants” alone in her dark room. Was she with her friends? I can't tell you how much that guides me in the performance and of course Doc and Jackson, their direction is so good, it's so useful and they just get me there. You know, when we were doing the episode where she's eating cereal, they made me eat crackers while I was doing it and it was incredibly natural, it was such a good idea, I'm going to steal that forever.

The last thing I wanted to ask you is, what is the weirdest or wackiest thing someone has ever made you do, either on camera or in the studio. Anything that you've thought “I can't believe you're going to make me say this or do this?”

There's a film we made called "[Period Piece](#)," we are reenacting an actual film strip from the 1970's about teaching sex education to trainables. So we took the film and kept the audio and we all got very crazy on tequila, Levi was the father and I was the retarded daughter, in a wig and a little dress and we were drinking and smoking. In the real film, because we're just following the audio, the whole family is telling this down syndrome girl “Um Jill, every woman gets her period, every 28 days for 3 to 4 days blood from inside a woman's body comes out from an opening between her legs.” They keep repeating that over and over and over and over, because she needs to learn. And we were just mouthing that over and over again, and then I say “But Mom, won't the blood get on my clothes?” “No Jill, because you use a sanitary pad.” “What's a sanitary pad?”

A wonderfully awkward interaction.

My sister is this beautiful Debbie Diamond gorgeous California girl. In the film they show a fake, but a used pad so we did that with ketchup and the whole thing. She's like “Come in the bathroom right now, I'm having my period, I'll show you.” It's so wrong. You can find that on YouTube, our version “Period Piece” but it's got an NC17 warning, it's flagged. Gee I wonder. That was probably the weirdest thing I've ever done.



It had like 50,000 hits before it got flagged.

Somebody complained, you ruined someone's day.

I did. I think it was probably a mother and her daughter and they were like oh... oh she's sticking a tampon on this girls head and the daughter is smoking, I don't think so.

Was there anything else that you wanted to talk about?

We should talk about the turn of the century show with Dame Darcy. So "Pox" was the cable access show we did but in the 90s I met up with Dame Darcy, the cartoonist, I don't know if you know "Meat Cake" the comic. It's Fantagraphics, it's incredible, it's like Victorian necrophiliac doll comics. You guys would love it. So she is still going, making dolls and she's a witch in Savannah, Georgia. But we did this, for a couple years we did a show called "Turn of the Century" it was Victorian ghosts and weird silent movies and all kinds of skits. Courtney Love came on and we were making dolls, it was incredible. I have the DVDs on my website. James Merendino and I did a pilot called "[Terror Lab](#)" it's also on YouTube, it's like a fake paranormal, like we're two rich kids doing paranormal, and we go in and bungle the whole thing but we're like whatever, we're rich. Mission accomplished.

When I get back in New York we're going to launch the new band "Radiana" and I found some amazing players in New York and we'll be making the web series. I was also just invited yesterday to come to Comic Con in September, if I can get away, I'll still be editing with James but we'll try. If anyone wants to see "[Pox](#)" it's on TLA video and keep an eye out for "The Sisters Plotz."

Well thank you so much for talking to us.

Thank you, it was fun.

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Lisa Lambert — That was so wonderfully written!!!! Excellent job!

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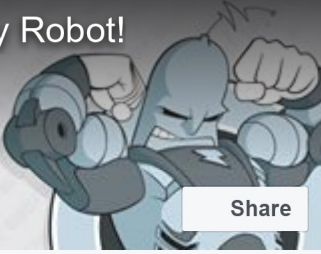
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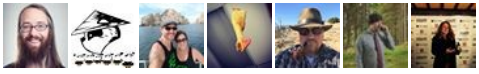
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