



PHOTO BY LADI VON JANSKY

ADAM  
GOLDBERG  
JUST FAMOUS  
ENOUGH

**A**dam Goldberg is no Brad Pitt—and he likes it that way. The 40-year-old actor has quietly carved out a noteworthy career by splitting his time between quirky independent flicks and big-studio hits. Since starring in *Mr. Saturday Night*, he's added *Dazed and Confused*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *The Hebrew Hammer* and other films to his formidable résumé. Besides keeping busy in movies and an array of TV series—*Double Rush*, *Head Cases*, *Friends*, *Entourage* and many more—Goldberg is a well-respected alternative musician. Under the moniker the Goldberg Sisters he's released a CD that finds him channeling John Lennon and the Smashing Pumpkins. Adam sat down with *HUSTLER* to discuss his favorite roles, musical inclinations and shaved beaver.

**HUSTLER: Are you ready for your first HUSTLER interview?**  
 ADAM GOLDBERG: I am. I shaved my beaver last night. I normally don't shave it, but I did for this occasion.

**A lot of celebrities are afraid to be interviewed by HUSTLER. Do you worry this might ruin your career?**  
 No! I think if anything, it has a small chance of elevating it to some degree.

**Do you remember the first time you saw a copy of HUSTLER?**  
 I do remember. It had to be in the '80s, because I remember that 1980s look with the high hair. The truth of it is, *HUSTLER* is the first time I saw the female anatomy—really saw it—and it may be the last time. Because in real life it's hard to get a clear view because of the proximity. And I'm very farsighted.

**You're often referred to as a quirky, neurotic independent actor. Does that label suit you?**  
 I guess the title is a way of describing someone who isn't Brad Pitt. I was in *Saving Private Ryan* and *A Beautiful Mind*, and those weren't indie films. In the larger scheme of my 20-year career I only recently started doing independent films: *Two Days In Paris*, *Untitled* and *The Hebrew Hammer*. But at the same time I've done all this totally mainstream television stuff, which has been largely how I made my living.

**What about the neurotic part?**  
 Well, I'm extremely neurotic. Do I always play neurotic roles? No, but it doesn't matter anymore because people have made up their mind. I wasn't neurotic in *Saving Private Ryan*. I played a guy who killed peo-



ple and got killed. But it's fair to say that over the years, people got to think I'm neurotic. You play up certain aspects of your own characteristics in order to have a career of some kind.

**How do you choose your roles?**

I don't usually. I'd be sitting here lying if I told you I did. I get offered some things, and I usually do them. Very rarely do I turn anything down. I'll do just about anything for money.

**Anything? Remember you're at HUSTLER.**

I did full-frontal nudity in the film *Two Days in Paris*, and I wasn't really getting paid. I think I would do just about anything for money. Wouldn't anybody these days?

**Give us some stories from your films, starting with *Saving Private Ryan*.**

You have these seminal experiences in your life, and for me that's one of them. I knew it at the time. I have a daily journal from that movie. It's hard to come up with one story. It was one of those experiences when I was really aware because I knew it was an important time. It was a very fraternal experience. We were a fairly tight group. The conditions were very difficult and exhausting. I complained a lot. The day of my death scene was really heavy. It was one of those days where what you want to do and what you are doing meld into one. Very cathartic.

***A Beautiful Mind*?**

Many hangovers. (Laughs.)

***The Hebrew Hammer*?**

Also many hangovers. (Laughs.) Anytime one of my films shoots in New York or near New York, there are problems. I remember this one action scene where I was chasing Andy Dick, and I had the worst hangover of all time that day. To add to that I got run over by a Big Wheel [tricycle].

***Dazed and Confused*?**

The first movie that I did was Billy Crystal's *Mr. Saturday Night*, which was a four-day shoot, and I got more or less cut out of the movie. But *Dazed and Confused* was four weeks in Austin, Texas. I was more excited, anxious and passionate about that film in many ways than anything I've done since. It was on TV the other night, and I watched a few minutes of it. Now I cannot stand my performance in it because I'm so aware of how hard I was trying.

**Do you like watching your other work?**

I'll watch something if it's on but not necessarily all the way through. I'm more interested in the things I've created as a filmmaker or musician. I have fairly little interest in watching myself act as the years go by. Usually there is so much self-loathing that it's not worth it. (Laughs.)

**What was it like to guest star on shows like *Friends*?**

I think it was the second year, and it was popular, but doing those shows is so isolated. You're on a sound stage. You don't get a sense of how big it is. Plus everyone there was really particularly cool and super respectful. I got along with everyone pretty well. There wasn't any weird crazy vibe about it.



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**What was the vibe on the *Entourage* set?**

You're isolated from any sense of it being anything. The last day I did on the show was just me on the phone in this house with two ladies. That scene was inserted in an *Entourage* episode. To be totally frank, everything has its own feel, but there is no sense of something being different because it's popular. But people are generally in better moods on a successful show.

**Is there a moment in your career that you're most proud of?**

*Two Days in Paris* was a real collaborative venture, and I'm very proud of *Untitled*. Proud of the things I contributed the most to, for better or worse. Not that I think they were the best overall product. I actually think I've been better in things people haven't seen, like the movie *From Within*. But nobody has really seen that. (Laughs.)

**Let's talk about your new record. Why did you bill yourself as the Goldberg Sisters?**

'Cause I guess I wanted to jump on the sister bandwagon. (Laughs.) There are a lot of good sister bands—the Scissor Sisters, the Chapin Sisters. Basically I just wanted to get in there somewhere. The short, true answer is because I thought of it one night after a thousand other band names. It stuck when I e-mailed it to a bunch of people.

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**How would you describe the record to someone who hasn't heard it?**

The Goldberg Sisters record is divided into two camps. It has a 1970s LP quality that I'm veering towards. The album also has a dreamy quality with some long outros. I don't think the songs meander, but the outros often do. I like that building, swirling crescendo thing.

**Vocally you sound like John Lennon and Billy Corgan from the Smashing Pumpkins.**

Yeah. I never thought about the Billy Corgan thing until recently. Then I heard it in something I was doing.

**Are Lennon and Corgan your biggest musical influences?**

John Lennon, there is no question. When I started playing, I didn't really learn other people's music. The idea of emulating anybody also seems like something that was beyond my reach because I could only do what I could do. I think when I sing, I probably have a quality that ends up sounding like John Lennon but it wasn't planned. My voice has a certain timbre. I'm sure years of listening to the Beatles and John Lennon seeped in. Elvis Costello was an influence as well, but my voice doesn't sound anything like his. So it would be Costello, David Bowie and then Lennon. Hopefully it's not too derivative.

**Because you've had such success as an actor, is it hard to be taken seriously as a musician?**

I haven't put myself out there in a way where I have been subjected to that much scrutiny. I haven't done what Juliette Lewis has done, which is go out on tour and be the front person of a rock outfit. My ambivalence about playing live might have something to do with that. It feels slightly insincere to me. My interest is more in the creating and recording of music.

I get very anxious playing live, and it's not what I'm inclined to do. I haven't put myself out there so I wouldn't have to deal with the criticism. I hope that the listener gets the sense that this music is just something I do as an artistic pursuit that you can either take or leave. It's not being shoved down the public's throat. What the—?!

[Editor's Note: At this point in the interview, Goldberg stands up to view what's hanging on a HUSTLER studio wall: a parody ad for the movie *Black Snake Moan* that depicts Christina Ricci giving head to Samuel L. Jackson.]

That's disturbing. That's my ex-girlfriend.

**Sorry. We should have covered that up.**

That's all right. I've seen it all before.

**You're credited for bringing out Christina Ricci's wild side.**

(Laughs.) They credit me for that? I didn't talk about our relationship then. I just have no interest in talking about it.

**We know that rock stars have groupies and even comics have them.**

You want to know if there are character actor groupies? (Laughs.) No. I have not had groupies. It is a subject that I am fascinated by, this sort of obsession with celebrity and fame. I made this film called *I Love Your Work*, which was in part about that. It is something that interests me a great deal. Luckily I'm just as well-known as I feel comfortable being—probably slightly more well-known than I feel comfortable being. 🌐