

coverstory

BY GEORGE DICKIE

# 'Mr. Corman' fights disillusionment and himself in Apple TV+ comedy



Joseph Gordon-Levitt stars in "Mr. Corman," premiering Friday on Apple TV+.

Josh Corman is a man underwhelmed by life and himself. As played by Joseph Gordon-Levitt ("Third Rock From the Sun," "Lincoln") in the Apple TV+ comedy series "Mr. Corman," which begins streaming Friday, Aug. 6, he's a 30-something born and raised in the suburbs of Los Angeles whose life hasn't turned out as he envisioned.

An artist at heart, his music career didn't amount to much and so he pays the bills by teaching fifth graders at a public school while sharing an apartment with his best friend Victor (Arturo Castro, "Broad City"). His relationship with his fiancée also has gone south and he struggles with feelings of anxiety, loneliness and depression, which he confides to his mother Ruth (Debra Winger, "Terms of Endearment"). On top of that, he also suspects he's not that great a person.

It's a lot for one young man to bear and Gordon-Levitt, who created the series, conceived of the character as an unlucky version of himself.

"It was sort of thinking about: What if just a couple of things were different?" the actor and San Fernando Valley native explains. "Like what if I hadn't found my partner yet? ... Or what if the art that I do hadn't panned out into a career? ... Or what if I had one good, healthy parent and one parent who was less healthy or problematic or causing chaos?"

"And so sort of making some of these changes like that formed this character, who is in many ways just like me,"

he continues. "He walks like me and talks like me. He grew up where I grew up. He went to high school where I went to high school. He had many of the same thoughts and opinions and tastes that I do. But these certain things are different."

But, Gordon-Levitt explains, Josh does have things in his life to be thankful for but he just doesn't appreciate them. He has a good job in a noble profession for which he seems to have a flair, he has friends who care about him and his mother is always there to lend a sympathetic ear.

Toward that end, the interplay between Josh and Ruth comes across as very natural mother/son dialog and Gordon-Levitt credits Winger for being a brilliant actress and fitting right in.

"She looks like my mom and my mom's sister, my mom's cousins," he reports. "Like the Gordon women, she has a very similar essence to her. And she also grew up in L.A. the way I grew up in the Valley, in the suburbs of L.A., the way that I did."

"And yeah, she's just the perfect person for this," he continues, "and if anybody out there hasn't seen 'Terms of Endearment,' it's really some of the best acting that's ever been done in a movie and she won the Oscar for it and with good reason. And it's been such a delight to do this together with her."

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