

HUMOR

Each year on my birthday I pause a moment to reflect and ask myself what's really important in life—specifically, am I famous yet?

Well, I'm 38, and I've still got quite a ways to go.

Now let me just say that I'm an evolved enough person to know that my unquenchable need for notoriety is inherently selfish and narcissistic. But, I'm sorry, that still doesn't stop me from wanting to be a guest on Ellen DeGeneres. Call me shallow, call me vain, but, Ellen, just call me!

And I'm not ashamed to admit that I feel relieved every year when I see that so few celebrities were born the same day I was. That way, when *Entertainment Tonight* does celebrity birthdays, I will actually stand a chance of making the cut.

Still, all in all, I must say, things are finally looking up.

On the celebrity food chain, I'm the rough equivalent of a one-celled, scum-sucking organism. But, since I'm finally making inroads in Hollywood, at least I'm sucking the right scum.

And with my first novel coming out in September, I sleep better knowing that, if nothing else, I'll be listed in the Library of Congress as "Acito, Marc 1966."

The realization that my life hasn't been a complete waste couldn't have come a moment too soon. I'm grateful that *Dame Fortune* seems to finally be smiling on me, but I'm embarrassed it took so damn long.

At this point, not only do the students in my college alumni magazine look young to me, but so do the professors. I suppose that being a late



**The Gospel According to Marc**  
by Marc Acito

# I'm a celebrity...

Get me a career!

bloomer beats dying on the vine, but it makes me feel like I'm Baby Huey—that huge, overgrown cartoon duck waddling around in a diaper.

In my checkered career (36 jobs in 22 years—you do the math), I've made more detours than a New York cabbie trying to run up the meter. And, along the way, I've discovered that one of the problems

with being well-rounded is you're not pointed in any one direction.

Personally, I think it's a gay problem. We're genetically wired to be fabulous—it's in our homo-chromosomes. As a result, we're the toughest people to impress. ("You're creative and talented? You have a tastefully decorated home and a gym body? AND...?")

Since every gay man thinks he's a star, when I get compliments, it's usually something like: "You're brilliant! A genius! You remind me of me!"

Speaking of reminding people of others, I should report that my increased exposure means I am getting recognized more often. Unfortunately, I'm getting recognized as Ben Stiller.

At first I was relieved—60 pounds ago people told me I reminded them of Nathan Lane. With all due respect to the pudgy and talented star, it mortified me to think that people saw me this way. Plus, you can well imagine that

anyone who doesn't want celebrities bogarting his birthday probably doesn't like being reminded that his appearance is unoriginal.

But all that changed when I went to L.A.



You see, in L.A. (unlike back home in Portland), someone who looks like Ben Stiller really could be Ben Stiller. And that's when the fun began.

As I was parking the car for a meeting at Fox, a cheerful Tyne Daly yoo-hooed and waved to me as she sped off the lot in a golf cart that she appeared to be stealing. (How—and why—she managed to navigate busy Pico Boulevard in a golf cart during rush hour remains a mystery.)

Likewise, on the way into Spago, Lori "Tank Girl" Petty flashed me a shy, but eager, smile—the kind that says: "Hi! Your career is way better than mine."

However, my favorite moment came as I walked out of Numbers in West Hollywood and heard someone say, "Look, there's Ben Stiller coming out of a gay bar!"

Of course, I could have corrected their misapprehension. But what's the fun in that? Instead, I hid my face and acted like I didn't want to be recognized. I'm hoping next time there'll be paparazzi. (Note to self: Call the *Enquirer*.)

But still (or perhaps I should say "stiller") I'm holding out hope for the day when I'm recognized for my own accomplishments (dubious as they may be) and for being my own charming self.

What's more, I know I will have truly arrived when someone goes up to Ben Stiller and tells him that he looks just like Marc Acito.

And that, my friends, is *The Gospel According to Marc*. **J**

MARC ACITO's first novel, *How I Paid for College*, will be published in September. Write him at [marc@marcacito.com](mailto:marc@marcacito.com).

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