

Hollywood Producer Drops by 826LA

Exclusive Interview with Producer Steven Puri

Producer Steven Puri visited 826LA. He is a producer for Kurtzman/Orci and DreamWorks. He has worked on *The Proposal*, *Transformers 2*, *Star Trek*, and *Eagle Eye*. According to him, ideas can come from toys, artwork, comics, video games, and books.

“The kind of movie DreamWorks hires us to make are tentpole movies, movies that make money,” Steven says. They are working on the sequel to *Star Trek*.

Steven told us how movies are made. First, the producer hires a writer to write the screenplay. Then the producer finds actors and a director. After that, they take everything to the studio. The money comes from the studio. It

takes millions of dollars to make movies.

Steven studied journalism at USC, but then he started making movies.

“I love finding stories—I wanted to find stories for movies.”

Steven’s favorite genre is action-adventure, and his favorite movie is *Braveheart*. The *Good Times* also got the exclusive scoop on some new DreamWorks projects, including *Deep Sea Cowboys*, about guys who go to the sea and save giant boats, and a new movie called

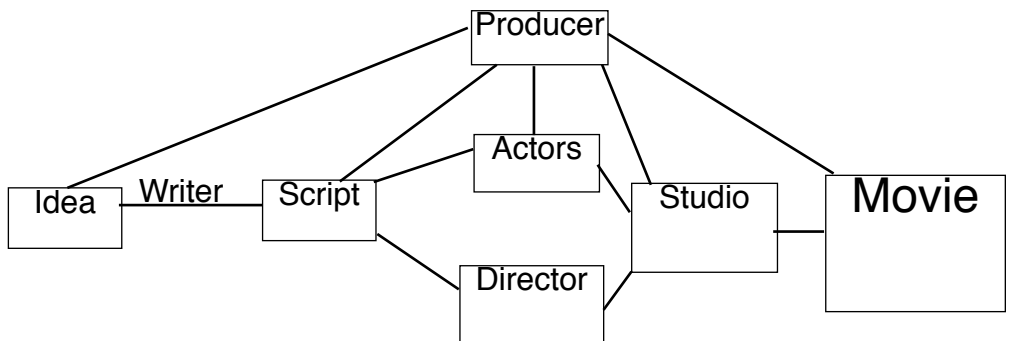
Cowboys vs. Aliens, based on a comic.

He has appeared in a movie, too.

The back of his head was in *Independence Day*. Steven says it’s hard to decide which movies get made, and that studio movies take a whole lot of money to make. 826LA



Puri



First-time Actor and Writer Films in Mexico

Alanis interviews Alex about his movie “Alex’s Trip to Mexico,” which he wrote and starred in. It was produced by the Echo Park Film Center in collaboration with 826LA. The film can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5OfRzHHA8M and has 110 views so far.

ALANIS: Did you like your movie?

ALEX: It was actually kind of weird filming it.

ALANIS: Why was it weird?

ALEX: We just went to random places I didn’t know.

ALANIS: Did you enjoy acting with your family?

ALEX: Yes, because they got to be with me every place I went.

ALANIS: What was your favorite part of the movie?

ALEX: The whole movie, because I got to see new places I didn’t know,

like Plaza Mexico, which was great.

ALANIS: Did you meet new people?

ALEX: Lee Lynch. He helped me with the filming. At Echo Park Film Center, they helped me make a screenplay. They asked if I wanted to act in the film. That got me interested.

ALANIS: How did it all start?

ALEX: It all started in a workshop at 826LA.

ALANIS: Did you like the part with the dogs fighting? (In the film, one of Alex’s relatives wagers on dogfights.)

ALEX: In the film, I had to be angry because they fight dogs until one dog kills the other. That made me sad, because I like dogs.

ALANIS: Was the beer real? (In one scene, a relative is holding a beer can.)

ALEX: No. We took a can and



wrapped it. I wrote a story, but they switched some parts.

ALANIS: Was your mom happy playing herself in the movie?

ALEX: She did it, but she was kind of nervous because she’d never been in a film.

ALANIS: You now have 97 views on YouTube of your movie. Are you happy with that?

ALEX: Yeah, that’s pretty awesome. I’m about to have 100 views. Some guy in Texas watched it.

ALANIS: In the future, would you like to make another movie?

ALEX: Yes, I’ll probably have some jobs acting. 826LA

All the Action, None of the Boring Stuff



Optimus Prime returns in “Transformers.”

TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN ★★★★★

In the movie, Optimus Prime died and then came back to life. That was the coolest part. The funniest part was the twin cars; one was red and the other was green. The reason why they are so funny is because they always would fight. That was my favorite movie ever. **BY JOSEPHINE**

Optimus Prime dies in the movie and returns with a new heart. This is the best *Transformers*, and the town cars are so cool. The thing that I liked about the film is that it is very funny and a little sad. **BY BIANCA**

ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS ★★★★★

The movie *Ice Age 3* is about the end of the Ice Age and the beginning of the Dinosaur Age. I liked this movie because it was really funny. I liked the part when the squirrel was trying to get the nut. The nut was stuck to his chest, and then the girl squirrel turned the tree over and ripped it off his skin. He screamed very loud. What I liked about this movie was the funny action about the animals.

BY ALANIS

Q&A with *Clone Wars* Animator

One of 826LA journalist Nickie Yang's favorite movies is *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, and he had the chance to interview animator Sianoosh Nasiri Ziba.

Q: Is it hard to do animation?

A: This is a tricky question to answer because animation many times may look simple but is complex in reality. About the animation that big studios produce, I can tell you if one has the passion and sacrifices a lot of time to study and practice, one becomes fluent in the required skills.

Q: Why did you choose to be an animator?

A: I have always been amazed by the work of great performers and actors, and since acting as a profession did not appeal to me that much, I deliberately chose to become a character animator. In fact, an animator can benefit from a wider variety of roles and characters than a live-action or stage actor: animators can also act as objects, animals and... Bringing a character to life and giving it personality is really satisfying for me, and it feels so cool when you witness how the audience reacts or shows empathy with character(s) that you created.

Q: As a child, did you want to be an animator?

A: Not really. I wanted to work in the visual effects industry when I was 13.

Q: How did you get started?

A: In 2001, after I saw *The Incredibles*, I got inspired to pursue character animation as my profession. At that time, there was no animation school that specifically taught character animation in my country, Iran. So I began by educating myself. Fortunately, I heard about an

online character animation school called *animationmentor.com*, which was exactly what I needed, so I went for it.

Q: What movies have you worked on beside *Clone Wars*?

A: They are all Persian movies. To name a few of them: *There's Always a Woman in Between*, *The Willow Tree*, *Aquarium* and *So Close, So Far*.

Q: Who are the people that help you, and what do they do?

A: In big studios, it is a common thing among animators to comment on each other's work. And I am fortunate enough to have very talented artists around who both inspire me and criticize my animation. I also learn a lot from my supervisor.

Q: What do you think of this idea for animating the opening credits of a movie: he characters shoot guns, and the bullet holes spell out their names.

A: It sounds like a cool idea! It could be the opening credit of a cowboy-adven-



ture movie with maybe a slight taste of comedy. And to add slight variety to the action, every character can enter and exit the scene differently. For example one of them can roll on the ground then shoot; the other could be hiding behind a wall and jump out... 826LA

MOVIE WORD SEARCH

D O C A Y O B T S E B X
I A C T I O N Z T Y W S
R P A D N G Z A U Z R E
E O S H O R T S D X I I
C P T C R I U X I R T V
T C I Z R P Z S O O E O
O O N X N I U M Y T R M
R R G O T Y P K U C K C
P N S O U N D T R A C K

Words to find (look forwards, backwards and diagonally).

1. Shorts
2. Movies
3. Up
4. Director
5. Best Show
6. Grip
7. Casting
8. Writer
9. Actor
10. Studio
11. Script
12. Soundtrack
13. Popcorn
14. Action



826LA journalist Marsden spent some time interviewing two notable voice actors, Andrew Kishino (Jazz in *Transformers: The Game*) and James Arnold Taylor (The Fallen in *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*).

Andrew Kishino

Q: How does it feel to play a mysterious character?

A: Mysterious characters are my favorites to play because they're fun, but also challenging. They're fun because mystery and suspense naturally makes people interested, and if you can display that intrigue well, then you'll have your audience follow along very closely. They're challenging because creating that air of mystery is not easy; it's very subtle. Take Wolverine from the X-Men. He's shrouded in mystery, and he says very little, but you always want to see more of him. Hugh Jackman does a great job of making that character come alive. I'm no Hugh Jackman, but I try to learn from people like him to improve my skills.

Q: If you could voice a different Transformer, who would it be?

A: I think I'd like to voice Optimus Prime (played by Peter Cullen). I'd like to voice him because he represents everything a good leader has—strength, confidence,

The Voices of *Transformers* speak

wisdom, and perspective. He leads the Autobots but never rules over them. He protects them but never treats them poorly. And he always opts to do what is right and just.

Q: What other movies besides *Transformers* have you worked on?

A: Well, to be precise, Darius McCreary voiced Jazz in the movie; I voiced Jazz in the video games. Still another incredibly talented actor, Phil LaMarr, voiced Jazz in the cartoon. But I have worked on *Get Rich or Die Trying*, and a few other movies doing what is called dubbing or ADR. Dubbing is a process where another actor revoices lines from a movie that may have been unclear when they were recorded at the time, or if there are changes to the line. ADR is short for Additional Dialog Recording, which is the process of recording voices that aren't main characters, but are necessary nonetheless. For example, if one of the characters in a movie is driving, and they turn on the radio, the radio announcer may be talking, and someone would have to be that voice.

Q: What do you like about being the voice of a Transformer?

A: I'm a fan of the movies, and I think the characters are well-developed and diverse. It's just really cool to play a huge, transforming Pontiac Solstice! Voiceover acting is really a dream job, because it allows me to see the world through other people's eyes.

James Arnold Taylor

Q: How does it feel to play a legendary character?

A: As a voice actor, I have had the opportunity to be many famous characters and voices, and it never gets old. I do my best to bring them to life with passion and a truth for each one. I love what I do, and I hope it comes out in my work.

Q: I think The Fallen is kind of mystic. Not much is known about him. How did you come up with the voice?

A: When I first auditioned it was in my home recording studio, so I was alone with the script and no direction from anyone, so I read through it a few times and tried a few different sounds. I found the final voice to be one that was comfortable for me to act in and yet was very different from most of the voices I do normally. It just came out, and I let it take me where it wanted to go, I guess.

Q: If you could be the voice of a different Transformer, who would it be?

A: Well I would have to say that my favorite Transformer is Optimus Prime, but that is mainly due to the amazing voice work by Peter Cullen. He embodies the character fully and gives such a strength. So I can't say I'd want to voice any others, just that I admire them all.

Q: What other movies besides *Transformers* have you worked on?

A: I am the voice of Obi-Wan Kenobi for *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* TV show and movie. I am also Leonardo in the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles film *TMNT*. I am also fortunate to have several TV shows on the air. I'm Johnny on the show *Johnny Test*, Green Arrow in *Batman: The Brave and the Bold*, Skunk on *My Friends Tigger and Pooh*, Ratchet in the *Ratchet and Clank* video games, Tidus in *Final Fantasy X*, and another famous voice I provide is the voice of Fred Flintstone.

Q: What do you like about doing a voice of a Transformer?

A: It's great to be a character that is so far from my real life. That's what makes movies so magical. 826LA

Grab a Donut. Watch These MOVIES!

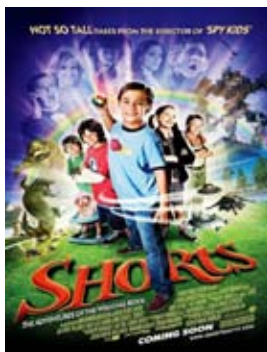
TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN By Oscar

The trailer for *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* is awesome! It has a lot of action. I like this trailer because it has some of the best parts of the movie. The acting looked good, and the special effects were very cool. My favorite line was when Sam's mom says, "Look at this place. I already feel smart. Can you smell it?" and then his dad says, "Yeah, it smells like \$40,000 a year." I liked when the meteorites hit all the different places, and Sam says, "This isn't my war." But Optimus Prime says, "It soon will be." They were in different places, including Egypt, an aircraft carrier, the Brooklyn Bridge in New York, and under the ocean. Sam draws symbols in the ground and then shows Optimus Prime to see what they mean. Sam says, "Those symbols must be something, a message or a map." In the first movie, they fight over a cube, but in the second movie, Megatron wants something from Sam's mind. In the second movie, there are new Transformers. This trailer stars Shia LaBeouf and Megan Fox. The director for this movie is Michael Bay. It has a lot of action, new Transformers, and different places all over the world, and it makes you want to see the movie. I give it 5 out of 5 donuts!



Profile: SHIA LA BEOUF

Shia La Beouf was raised in Echo Park. His dad used to dress him up as a clown to hustle for money. He grew up kind of poor. He began acting when he was 12 years old. Later on he became famous for his part on the Disney channel series *Even Stevens*. Now he is in the *Transformers* sequel *Revenge of the Fallen*. By the way, he is really cute. By Alanis



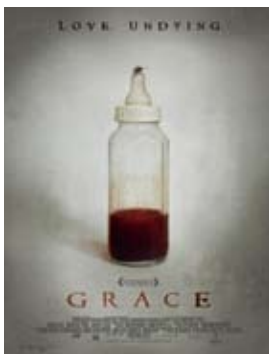
SHORTS By Oscar

In the trailer for *Shorts*, a colorful rock falls from the sky. The rock is a wishing rock. Then the kids wish for stuff. The rock falls in the wrong hands, and that person wishes to be the strongest thing in the world, and they have to stop him. It was directed by the director of *Spy Kids*, Robert Rodriguez. The rock turns people into whatever they want, such as little Martians, big beetles, big ears, monsters, and other stuff. A boy wanted telekinesis, but he accidentally wished for tele-phonesis, so a telephone popped out of his head. This was my favorite scene. I liked

everything from the trailer, and it was very funny. I give it 5 out of 5 donuts!

GRACE By Bianca

The movie is about a mom who lost her baby in an accident while pregnant. It's stillborn, but she wants to have it anyway. She has the baby but then gets sick. There are flies all around, and she tells people her baby needs special food. She kills a man to feed her baby near the end. She ends it by saying nobody is taking her baby away. I give it 5 out of 5 donuts!



Movies Made in ECHO PARK by Miguel

Chinatown The movie was made in 1974. The director is Roman Polanski. The main character is J.J. Gittes (Jack Nicholson).

Echo Park The movie was made in 1986. The director is Robert Dornhelm. The main characters are Henry (Christopher Walker) and August's father (Heinrich Schweiger).

Quinceañera The movie was made in 2006. The directors were Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland. The main characters were Maria (Araceli Guzman-Rico) and Magdalena (Emily Rios).

Columbus Day The movie was made in 2008. The director is Charles Burmeister. The main character is John Cologne (Val Kilmer).

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To: 826LA Good Times Staff
Fr: Reader Joshua Trillegi
Re: Monday, June 8th Edition

Wow, a staff of the future...

Whenever the *Los Angeles Times* gets me down, I reach for the honest, innocent, yet truthful reporting that jumps off the pages of the *Good Times* publication, produced and created by human beings of few years, yet infinite wisdom. When a reporter like Josephine tells us she was tired after the workshop, we know she gave it her all!

When Alex and Alanis remind us that having a stadium in our neighborhood has its prices, historically and otherwise, they pull no punches with the hard facts as well as the benefits. Then Bianca chimes in to let us know about the foam fingers they sell at the stadium, which I've always wanted to get but could never admit it to my friends. She is a brave first-person reporter unafraid to tell the truth.

Also, bravo for the beach clean-up report. Very inspiring work by everyone!

How do I subscribe?

A Fan,
Joshua Trillegi



Stop the Presses!, the 826LA Good Times regatta team, raised \$1,325 thanks to...

Amanda Becker, Benjamin Benson, Kathleen Bishop, Cheryl Cheng, Christie Cheng, Christine Chiao, Maribel de la Torre, Frank Frisoloi, Suzanne Granados, Steven Hanna, Leslie Kalohi, Larry Kao, Greg Katz, Darren Kim, Laurence Lerman, Chris McKinley, Shazila Mohammed, June Nishimura, Mychelle Peterson, Jim & Elaine Phillips, Kathy Ripley, Jennifer Rzepka, Cindy Spielvogel, Michael Swimelar, Eve Troeh, Brittney Weissman, Christine Ziemba

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ages 6–18, interested in
journalism of all sorts, as
well as adult volunteers
who can help students
write a good story.

For more info
on *826LA Good Times*,
please write to us at
thegoodtimes@826LA.org

826LA Good Times Staff

ALANIS is 10 years old. She is intelligent and likes to play her PSP and Nintendo DS. She goes to Logan Street School. Her favorite movie is *Meet the Spartans*.

ALEX is 10 years old. He likes math. He has a PSP. He goes to Micheltorena School. His favorite movie is *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*.

BIANCA is from Echo Park and has lived here for 11 years. She likes to kick it, shoot pool, watch TV (*Sweet 16*, *Mind of Mencia*, *Yo Momma*, *Quiero Mi Quince*), listen to music, go to the park and El Centro Del Pueblo, watch the Lakers and the Dodgers, and text her friends. Her favorite movie is *Black Christmas* (1974).

JOSEPHINE is 7 years old, in second grade at Charles H. Kim Elementary School, and lives in Echo Park. She likes to play soccer, basketball, baseball, bowling, dodgeball, and handball. Her favorite movie is *The Neverending Story*.

MARSDEN is 10 years old and in fifth grade. He loves video games. He goes to Dahlia Heights. His favorite movie is *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*.

MIGUEL is 14 years old. He goes to Fairfax High School, and he likes to play soccer. His favorite movie is *Quarantine*.

NICKIE is 8 years old and in fourth grade. He goes to Dahlia Heights Elementary School. His favorite movie is *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*.

OSCAR is 10 years old. He likes to play soccer and video games. He also likes to watch TV. He likes tacos, hamburgers, pizza, and homemade food. He used to go to Logan Street School, but when he went to fifth grade, he changed to Micheltorena Street School. His favorite movie is *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*.