

HUMOR

When I started this column four years ago, I was working 60 hours a week at a job I hated so much I wanted to chew off my arm. I couldn't imagine how I was possibly going to forge a career as a full-time writer.

A year later, the nutty idea of a novel about teen larceny came banging on the doors of my subconscious, demanding to be let out and literally keeping me up at night. So even though I didn't have the time, I started writing it.

As a result, I was totally sleep-deprived for a year and a half. One time I actually came home from the grocery store and put a gallon of milk in the laundry room and a gallon of bleach in the fridge.

Shortly thereafter, I went to a reading given by Portlander Chuck Palahniuk, best-selling author of *Fight Club*. Like any other fan, I told Chuck my name as I handed him a book to sign. Then, in a moment that changed the course of my life, he looked up at me and said: "I know who you are. I read your column."

Cue the Hallelujah Chorus.

Based on the strength of the columns alone, Chuck recommended me to his agent, who submitted my manuscript to Chuck's editor, who bought the book in just two days. Two weeks later, the film rights were optioned by Columbia Pictures for Laura Ziskin, producer of the *Spider-Man* movies. The sale of foreign and

audio rights soon followed.

Suffice it to say, my cup runneth over so much I needed a mop.

What I learned from this experience is the power of dreaming big, but starting small. My little column has led to some very big things: My book, *How I Paid for College: A Novel of Sex, Theft, Friendship and Musical Theater*, landed me in *People* magazine (I always knew I was a *People* Person), was chosen as an Editors' Choice by *The New York Times* and has been compared to both *War and Peace* and

A talent to amuse

Columnist bids farewell

Moby Dick—unfavorably, but at least it was compared.

Still, I was pleased to see *How I Paid for College* outselling *How to Stay Christian in College* on Amazon and to see it posted on the Random House Web site under Bill Clinton—or, as I prefer to think of it, in the Monica position.

Unfortunately, due to the increased demands on my time (I've been to 16 cities in the past three months) I'm finding it difficult to maintain deadlines—or my sanity. So this column will be my last. And while there is definitely a voice in my head that says, "Marco, don't give up your gay job," I need to focus on writing more books.

So let me say thank you, dear readers, for being such faithful followers of "the gospel." I'm especially grateful to those of you who took the time to write me, particularly if you sent nude pictures. Keep those e-mails coming, boys.

Thank you, too, to the editors of the papers around the country that carried me, especially Marty Davis of *Just Out*, who gave me my start. I

am exceedingly proud to have been a part of the gay press.

And most importantly I am thankful to my own in-house editor: my husband (in Canada at least), Floyd Sklover, who has lovingly edited (and re-edited) every draft of every piece I've written—a hundred columns in all. He's also responsible for their distribution and book-keeping, as well designing and maintaining my adorable Web site, MarcAcito.com. I wish everyone could be as lucky in love as I am.

On the wall above my computer is a quotation from Walt Whitman. It reads, "The attitude of great poets is to cheer up slaves and horrify despots." In my own peculiar way, it's what I've aspired to accomplish with this column. If I've managed to make you laugh as well as make you think, then I have succeeded. And rest assured, I will continue to strive to become a queer of influence in the culture.

My parting thought to you is this: Sometimes our dreams feel so huge and unattainable we shove them in a drawer and try to forget about them. But, if there is something in your life you'd like to see happen, keep that goal in sight, nurturing it little by little, and you'll be amazed at what you can accomplish. I am living proof that anything is possible.

Stoke the fires of your burning ambition. Have the courage to be outrageous and extraordinary. And, most of all, be splendid. If I can do it, so can you.

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

Readers who wish to be on MARC ACITO's oh-so-exclusive mailing list should write him at marc@marcacito.com.



The Gospel According to Marc
by Marc Acito



WELLS FARGO PRESENTS THE NEXT STAGE IN THE WINNINGSTAD

21 DOG YEARS: DOING TIME @ AMAZON.COM

created and performed by **MIKE DAISEY**
directed by **JEAN-MICHELE GREGORY**

PORTLAND CENTER STAGE THEATER LIVE

JAN 4-FEB 6, 2005 503 274-6588 www.PCS.org 1111 SW BROADWAY

30...15 MERRILL CORPORATION

Come join us for the official
kick-off of

Jocks & Socks

Thursday, January 27th
at 9:30 p.m.

Wear a jock and receive a
free room upgrade for
your next weekday visit.

Steam Portland

The Northwest's newest, cleanest
and hottest men's club and bath.

2885 NE Sandy Blvd, Portland, OR 97232
Info Line: 505-736-9999
www.steamportland.com
Must be at least 18. Membership required.