

Graduation: Desperate Times Call for Desperate Measures

"I don't know, maybe I'll sell babies on the black market," a friend recently said to me, referring to the growing uncertainty of her postgraduation plans.

"Well, it's a growth market, and I'm sure you'd get to meet the most interesting people," I replied, obnoxiously smug, knowing that my own postgraduate plans consist of finding a graduate school that will agree to take my money in exchange for sheltering me from the blistering responsibilities of the "real world" for two more years.

This has been a common conversation recently among my friends and I, or at least I presume it has been. I can't be sure because I usually tune out my friends when they talk to me about anything other than how funny my last column was.

Occasionally though, some of their words manage to penetrate my mental defenses, and I'm pretty sure I've heard the words "interview," "résumé" and "job" tossed around quite often, especially in conjunction with the word "worried" or, more often, the phrase "I'm so fucked."

Another friend of mine from back home, let's call him Matt, as that is his name, e-mailed me recently asking, "What the hell am I going to do with a degree in television?"

I thought I remembered Sally Struthers telling me a long time ago that you could make more money (which, sure, we all want to do) if you got a degree in television, but then remembered that, in fact, she was ped-



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POTTY MOUTH

dling degrees in television repair.

I was stumped. "Are you good with babies?" I asked.

"Huh?"

"Never mind."

Fortunately, Matt had already realized that a degree in television would be a good starting point for a career in, would you believe, television. He outlined the long, arduous, ass-kissing-intensive path from lowly production assistant all the way up the ladder to lowly scriptwriter.

To me, it sounded about as attractive a career move as working your way up from the bottom of the medical world to become the world's foremost expert on proctology. The only real difference I could see was that with writing, you don't get those rubber gloves.

Growing up, I had always thought I

was going to go into business. When I started college, people asked me what I wanted to do, and I replied, "Business."

Eventually, it occurred to me that my business aspirations were never fully developed. I had no idea what "business" entailed. I just thought it would be nice to have a big desk and a secretary with which to use my big desk for wholly nonwork-related "business."

Unfortunately, I think that's where most of my friends are right now.

They're about to graduate with a degree that's worth less than a buy one/get one free coupon from Sid's House of Barium Enemas. They're insanely jealous of their friends with degrees in something useful like "finance" or "political science" or "not psychology."

I don't know exactly what advice to give. I'm too busy pretending I really want to go into advertising.

The one thing I can tell you, though, is this. "No matter who you are, no matter what you studied in college, no matter what career you choose, always remember, if you have blond hair, blue eyes, and an IQ of 140 or higher, I know someone who might want your babies."

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'Pollock' Paints Dark Portrait of Artist

By ALLISON ROST
Staff Writer

Art is a struggle, and the constant search to find one's muse has unhinged painters like Van Gogh and Gauguin.

American abstract expressionist Jackson Pollock, famous for his paint-splattered works, faced this same demon during his rise to fame in the post World War II period. He dealt with them through alcoholism and manic behavior, as powerfully illustrated by the Oscar-nominated "Pollock."

Ed Harris plays the title character, and when the movie begins, Pollock is struggling to make a living in 1941 Manhattan.

One day, fellow artist Lee Krasner (Marcia Gay Harden, winner of the Best Supporting Actress Oscar) knocks on his door, beginning a tempestuous relationship that consumes both of their lives as Pollock cycles through bouts of intense creativity and infantile behavior.

He manages to stay sober for a two-year period in which he produces some of his best work, but self-doubt and need for independence push him back

to alcohol and towards his downfall.

Harris and Harden both give amazing performances as Pollock and Krasner, and so convincingly portray their intense and complex relationship that it is painful to watch as Pollock progressively loses self-control.

Harris is particularly good at teetering on the edge of Pollock's insanity and proves his Best Actor-worthiness. He's like a child when he doesn't get what he wants and is completely unprepared for the side effects of success. He also deserves props for recreating many of Pollock's most famous works onscreen.

In addition, Harris also took on the task of directing the film. He is blessed with a real-life story better than many written for the screen.

It is intriguing to watch events such as Pollock meticulously creating a mural for his patron, then showing up drunk and uncontrollable at her party for its completion.

But Harris handles the material in such a way that the two-hour running time seems to stretch into oblivion. The beginning scenes in Manhattan are crisp and quickly paced, but once Pollock and Krasner move to Long Island for a less-chaotic lifestyle, the tempo becomes languid and lazy as well.

The last half-hour in particular drags on and on. All the signs point to Pollock's tragic end, but the suspense keeps hammering at you until you just want to get it over with.

While the treatment could have used some tinkering, the power of the story remains. The film might be titled "Pollock," but the story is really about his bittersweet and tragic love with Krasner. With such capable actors taking on those roles, that impact cannot be undermined, no matter what.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu.



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