TRAUMALAND

DIRECTED BY "HAPPY DAYS" DON MOST

A FEEL-GOOD MOVIE ABOUT FEELING TERRIBLE

BASED ON HANALA SAGAL'S BESTSELLING MEMOIR

“I’m Hanala Sagal and I turn trauma into comedy, PTSD into LOL. When I was little, I came home from school crying that the girls didn't like me. My mother responded with ‘You think they liked me in Poland? No, they tried to kill me. Go eat something and watch TV.’ This is my story."

TRAUMALAND is a heartfelt, hilariously raw comedy based on the real life of Hanala Sagal– daughter of Holocaust-survivors who escapes the trauma (and Montreal) by running to L.A. to become famous… because famous people get attention. But instead of fame, she finds addiction, heartbreak, and eventually, herself.

What follows is a rollercoaster of recovery, comedy, and redemption—leading to a billion views, and a legacy of helping others through humor. This story is about surviving survival – turning inherited pain into laughter and proving that Trauma + Time = Traumedy. And it’s proof that laughter isn’t betrayal… it’s survival.

✡️ *WHY NOW?*

Audiences are hungry for truth-telling, resilience, and humor in dark times. Traumaland turns pain into performance, using laughter as the ultimate act of rebellion and recovery. With antisemitism rising and generational trauma still echoing, Traumaland proves that Jewish stories can be funny, flawed, and fiercely human.

🎭 Why It Works:

- Proven Demand: Biographical, female-led dramedies (Fleabag, The Bear, Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt, Physical) are critical and commercial successes.
- Distinctive POV: Blends generational trauma, addiction, and feminism through the lens of sharp dark humor.
- Multi-Format Potential: Adaptable as a feature film, limited series, or one-woman stage play.
- Author's Voice: Written by the real-life Hanala Sagal, comedian, recovery speaker and writer/co-executive producer of ***Elvis & Nixon*** (Amazon Originals).

🎨 Visual/Stylistic Approach:

- Surreal, stylized flashbacks
- Period-specific glam-grit (Hollywood 1982 meets Montreal 1965)
- Strong use of music, inner monologue, and animated sequences for memories and breakdowns

🎯 Target Audience:

- Fans of Fleabag, Euphoria, Transparent, Silver Linings Playbook
- Women 25–85, recovery communities, mental health advocates, Jewish communities
- Viewers craving complex, funny, flawed female leads

💸 Funding Goal:

Seeking development financing, co-production partners. Materials include screenplay, one-woman stage version, budget, shooting schedule and pitch reel.

SYNOPSIS

Meet Hanala, a brilliant, hyper kid growing up in 1960s Montreal with Holocaust-survivor parents who love TV more than her. Her bedtime stories? Less Cat in the Hat, more Aunt in the Camp. She vows to become famous – because famous people get attention.

Originally named after an aunt murdered in a Nazi death camp, (no pressure), she changes her name to Suzan, loads up on codependency and eyeliner, battles booze, bad men, and breakdowns, and crashes headfirst into showbiz—and then into a Christmas tree, while drunk, at a Beverly Hills Alcoholics Anonymous gala.

But Hanala claws her way back. After surviving addiction, narcissists, and the '80s, Hanala reinvents herself as a one-woman wellness revolution. She creates Comedy Wellness, a life-saving blend of humor and healing, helping others rewrite their trauma stories. In the '80s, she becomes a fitness icon with "Shape Up LA!" and the original *viral vlogger* decades before the word "vlog" existed. Marlon Brando even taped her shows—on VHS.

Hanala produces 200 episodes for cable and satellite, wins awards for her work, while teaching aerobics classes at L.A. health clubs. Her nightmares subside as her dreams begin coming true. There's even a big wedding. She appears in movies and TV shows, sometimes playing herself – shaping up Bette Midler in "Ruthless People" (1986). Her parents visit her beautiful house in L.A. Hanala interviews her mom on her show. Hanala finally has her parent's attention and respect.

Traumedy = *Trauma + Time = Comedy.* It's "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" meets "The Diary of Anne Frank"—with abs.

WE SCREENPLAY FEATURE SCREENWRITING COMPETITION

TRAUMALAND

WE SCREENPLAY

Comedy | Feature

The script has a tall order. Not to make the Holocaust funny. Not once does the material even remotely suggest this. No, instead, the material looks at how we can cope with trauma through time and perspective. And a bit of humor.

The film's tackling of a second-generation survivor of the Holocaust whose parents carried the weight of the experience through their daily lives is poignant and hilarious in equal measure. We all at once relate to all of the characters as we understand Hanala's parents' inability to let go of such a devastating tragedy and also to Hanala's impatience with not being the one responsible for their suffering and lack of acknowledgment of her own issues.

The bite and self-deprecating humor Hanala carries with her into adulthood clearly stemmed from her upbringing.

There are numerous laugh-out-loud jokes that will be memorable quotes.

The dialogue and humor are whip-sharp and captures the zest that made the original book the piece is based on so popular.

Hanala is a hilarious and original character.

The arc she goes on over the course of the film is both hilarious and poignant.

It would be great for a unique perspective like Hanala's to find viewers and show them a different side of a culture that is largely misunderstood.

NICHOLL FELLOWSHIPS
IN SCREENWRITING

Traumaland is an irreverent and darkly comedic biopic about a Jewish actress who wishes to find success for herself while carrying baggage from her family and their history.

The script explores Hanala's troubled life with a somewhat nonchalant energy that definitely had me invested and amused by her take on being Jewish, alcoholism and the entertainment business.

Made me laugh out loud.

The early pages deep dive into young Hanala's psyche is intriguing.

The moments I enjoyed the most were the strong character relationships.

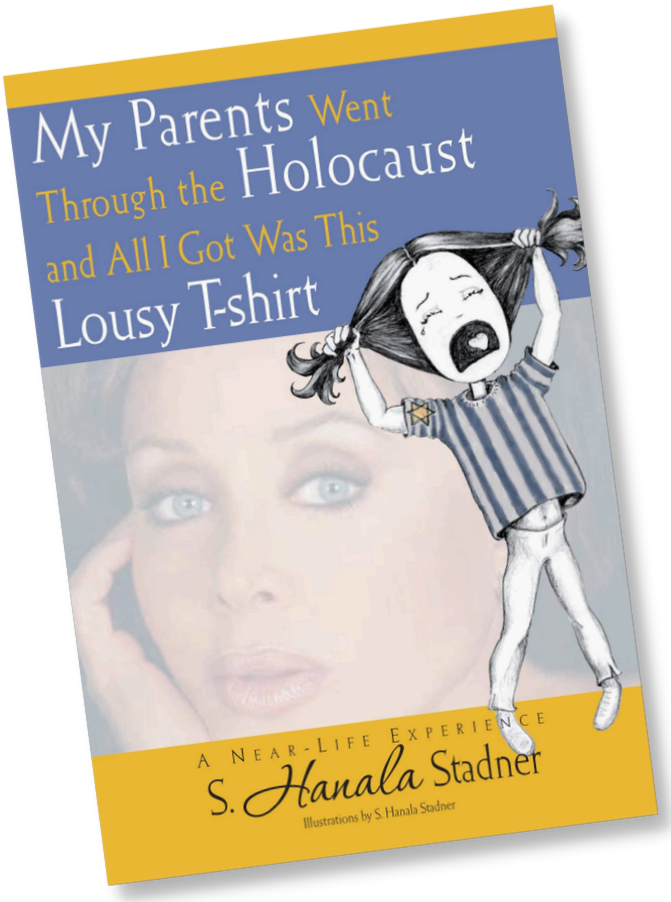
The dialogue is snappy and with enough bite to emphasize the script's dark humor.

Creative scene shifting devices, with cinematic style to burn.

This script is uniquely written with a creative vision (often incorporating animation) and a strong voice.

"beneath the chaos is a sharp, aching voice — both deeply personal and wildly relatable."

"Hilarious and original"



"Hanala's book is smart, funny and touching. She's faced and overcome incredible challenges and never lost her sense of humor."

- Jeff Kanew, Director of *REVENGE OF THE NERDS*

"I loved this funny book!"

- Kirk Douglas

"Hanala's gift for storytelling draws you into her world and grips you with humor and compassion. It's funny and sad....a wild ride."

- Renee Firestone, Holocaust survivor, star of Steven Spielberg's *THE LAST DAYS*

"I laughed, I cried, I marveled... Side-splitting humor."

- Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben PhD

"My Parents Went Through the Holocaust and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt" is featured in The Last Laugh documentary starring Mel Brooks and is in the Simon Wiesenthal Center Library.

"I tape your shows."
- Marlon Brando

"Shape Up, L.A. is funny and profound"
- Alec Baldwin

"We love your show."
- Matt Stone (Creators of *South Park*)

"25 years of therapy in a 20 minute show"
- Jerry Rubin

"Eddie and I love Shape Up, L.A!"
- Valerie Bertinelli

"We watch the show in our newsroom"
- Dallas Raines, KABC Meteorologist

"Hanala, you are an artist"
- Norman Lear

"I love your book title"
- Barack Obama

"*Funny*" - Alan Zweibel,
Saturday Night Live

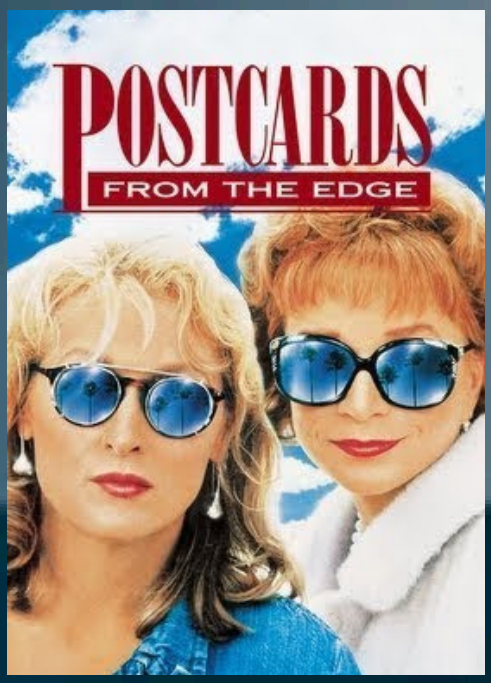
"I enjoyed your autobiography"
- Sir Anthony Hopkins

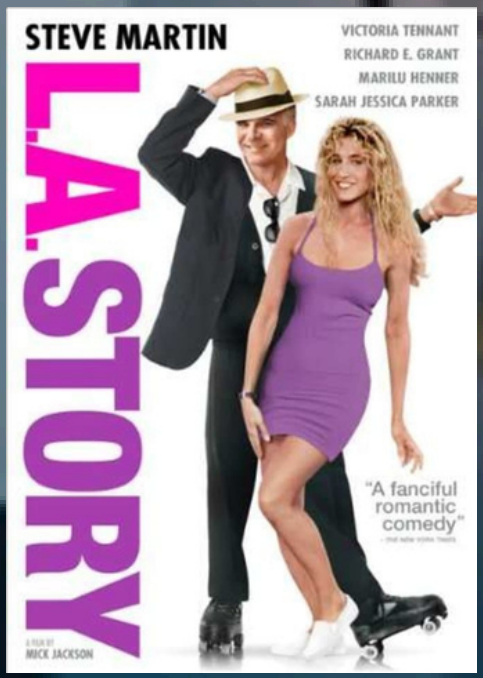
"It's a textbook for secondary trauma in children of Holocaust survivors but much, much funnier"
- Cleveland Jewish News

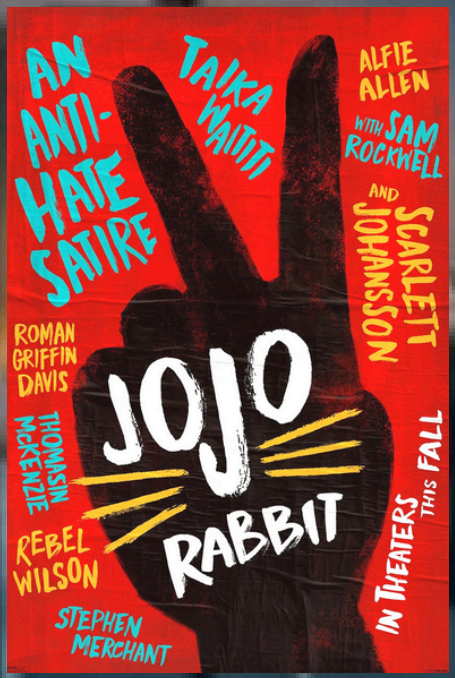
Secondary Trauma

Illustrations by Hanala Sagal

COMPARABLE FEATURE FILMS







TRAUMALAND

PRODUCER / SCREENWRITER

Hanala Sagal, the daughter of Holocaust survivors, is a Canadian-born, L.A. based writer, actress, comedian, sober since December 28th, 1982. She co-wrote and Executive Produced ***Elvis & Nixon***, the 2016 Tribeca Film Festival Centerpiece winner.

Writing and hosting cable TV's hit ***Shape Up LA!*** in the 80s and 90s, Hanala created Comedy Wellness, fitness for mind and body. The popular TV guru helped shape the aerobics movement through videos and teaching packed classes at The Sports Connection.

In 2006, she launched her YouTube channel—bringing laughter and life skills to millions. She's now clocked a billion minutes watched, proving people really do want to feel better—they just prefer to laugh while doing it. Nominated for the Hedy Lamarr Awards for Women in Entertainment & Technology, Hanala was runner-up to Geena Davis. She's now 42 years sober, a respected speaker, a trauma coach, and a singer in a successful band!

Hanala continues to work in the field of substance abuse leading workshops, yoga and Zoom classes for people in recovery.

"damn entertaining"

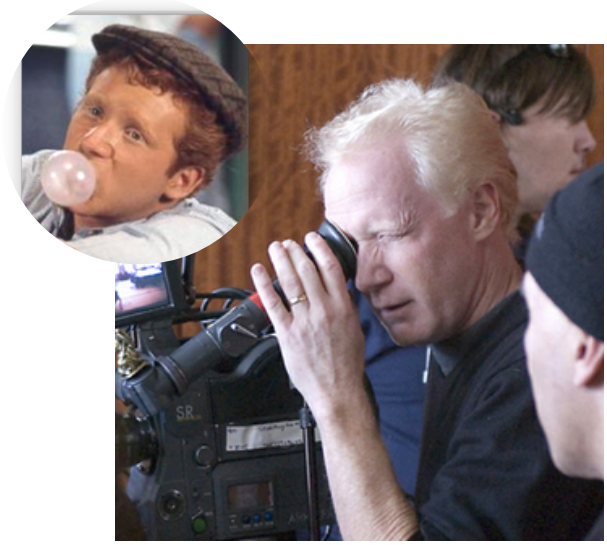
RollingStone

"A THOROUGHLY CHARMING COMEDY!
New York

"ONE OF THE MOST ENTERTAINING MOVIES I'VE SEEN THIS YEAR!"
RICHARD ROEPER, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

TRAUMALAND

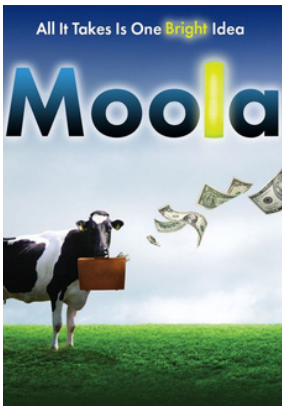
DIRECTOR



Don Most is best known for his co-starring role as Ralph in the long running television series ***Happy Days***. During this time, he worked with talents like Jerry Paris, Henry Winkler, Ron Howard and Garry Marshall. Following in the footsteps of some of his peers, Don began directing feature films.

His first, ***The Last Best Sunday***, had its World Premiere at the Seattle Film Festival and was a winner at the Telluride Independent Film Festival. It was picked up for Worldwide Distribution and aired on Lifetime.

Don's next film, ***Moola***, premiered at the Newport Beach Film Festival, where it won the "Outstanding Achievement in Filmmaking Award" in the Directing category. It was then picked up for Worldwide Distribution and by Showtime.



In January 2022, Don earned three awards for ***Scrambled*** (Best Comedy, Director, and Actor) in the New York International Film Awards.

THEATRE DIRECTING
Doubles -- West Coast Premier Tamarind Theater/LA
Is There Life -- World Premier Tamarind Theater/LA
After Birth -- Three One Act Plays -- World Premier Malibu Playhouse

NEWPORT BEACH FILM FESTIVAL

TAP TO WATCH
Don & Hanala!

scan to watch the reel

Contact for Screenplay, Budget & Shooting Schedule
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