

FOREVER YOUNG (1)

For many years I had been a recognisable face in movies and TV shows. This was initially because of my role as Denny, the likeable innocent, on the TV comedy Not Now Dad, but when Denny became a breakout character with his own short-lived sitcom Not Now Denny, I found myself “typed”, and the roles I was now being sent up for were all the same: likeable innocents, loveable doofuses, irrepressible class clowns, and so on. In short, variants on a theme of Denny.

I was tired of it, to be honest. I didn't want to spend the rest of my life being stereotyped as one character. More than that even, I wanted to show the world that I wasn't just an adult actor.

People ask me, was it a tough decision, becoming a child actor? After all, they'd say, everyone knows you as an adult actor. “Not really,” I'd say. Because if there's one thing I know, it's this: talent will out. We make our own luck in this life, and success is 99% hard work. And if you know that, then maybe, just maybe, dreams can come true.

But how does a former adult actor – and one who's been typed as a particular *kind* of adult actor – make the leap to child actor? It seemed impossible: for a start, I wasn't a kid. That was plain to anyone. I was, true, quite short in height. That helped: I could at least play fairly tall kids. As for the moustache, well, that problem was solved with a couple of strokes of a razorblade. My skin was soft from years of good dermatologic care, and my hair was dense and child-like. Even my voice was high and fluting. I was practically an actual kid.

The only real issue was my age. 47 is pretty old for a child actor. I could have played a Benjamin Button type of kid but those sorts of movies don't come along every day, and besides, I wasn't a freak. Maybe a kid who wore a hood over their head? But sadly there were very few movies about junior Mexican wrestlers.

In the end, I just decided to be true to myself. Here I am, I said, I can do no other. I resolved never to sell out, never to give in, and always to cleave to my dream of becoming a child actor. I swore never to be jealous of the kids who did get the plum roles just because of their age, because one day they'd be in the same boat as me.

My agent has dumped me. My girlfriend has dumped me. I have no friends. But I don't care. I'm a child actor and I know my craft. I may be entering my fifties now, spending my life sitting on a park bench watching the sun rise and fall. But I know that if I keep pushing, if I keep on believing, my ship will come in.

Because dreams do come true.