



Sarah Jones's Aha! Moment

Limos! Celebs! Parties! *Not!* The actress-playwright's art lay elsewhere (thank you, Meryl Streep).

As a playwright and performer trying to make it without losing my integrity, I've had plenty of experience with disappointment. My small-venue, one-person shows—in which I played characters of both sexes and various ages and races—won me awards and accolades, but no opportunities to reach the next level. Bigger theater producers wanted to market me as something I wasn't. Network executives would say, "Gosh, you're so talented, we don't know what to do with you." They'd usually offer me a spot on some uninspired sketch comedy show. When the meetings began to wear on my self-esteem, I reluctantly accepted one of these jobs. At first the excitement distracted me from my fears of "selling out"—limo rides, celebrity parties; what's not to love? But reality set in quickly as the mostly male writers churned out scripts that belittled women and brimmed with broadly drawn stereotypes and cheap gags. I quit before the first taping and settled back into my solo shows, performing for everyone from dignitaries to the incarcerated. It was deeply fulfilling, but I often experienced pangs of doubt, wondering how it would have felt to really make it. An unexpected encounter answered my question.

As emcee at a benefit for Equality Now (an international women's rights group), I met Meryl Streep, who is a great humanitarian. She invited me to breakfast soon after, where she agreed to produce my off-Broadway show *Bridge & Tunnel*. Sitting across from perhaps the most talented person in Hollywood, I realized that I *had* made it, and I had gotten there by doing what I believed in. A few red carpets later, I'm still no starlet. I'm a playwright and performer working with people I've always admired, and discovering that they admire me, too—because I took the hard road, and I made it.

TREATS

You've Got Meal!

Aviva Goldfarb had one of those ideas—incredibly obvious, yet nobody had thought of it—that immediately make the pieces of your brain fit together with a neat *click*. A wife, mother, self-published cookbook author, and organizational ace, Goldfarb realized that for most people 6 P.M. was too late to start wondering what to cook for dinner. So she started the **Six O'Clock Scramble** (thescramble.com), a weekly e-mail newsletter with five days' worth of dinner recipes, plus grocery lists. The meals (grilled teriyaki chicken tenderloins one night, baked huevos rancheros another) take about a half hour to prepare and are creative, healthy, unprocessed, and kid-friendly without being adult-alienating. A subscription costs \$5 a month—a small price to pay for a whole new kind of happy meal. Goldfarb herself is happy, having graduated from the self-publishing business: Next fall St. Martin's Press will release *The Six O'Clock Scramble Cookbook*.



Stud Muffins

We love a good muffin, and we've always been happy with the usual types—corn, bran, lemon poppy seed, chocolate chip. But two muffin studs, Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough, have just come out with **The Ultimate Muffin Book** (William Morrow), which redefines the muffin as a sweet-savory-cheesy-fruity-goopy-crumbly creation beyond our wildest cravings. A partial list: apricot, beer (with Dijon and Cheddar), Black Forest, chestnut, daiquiri, Earl Grey, fig, ginger, graham cracker, jalapeño, margarita, roasted garlic, sesame, s'mores, Stilton. Have you preheated the oven yet?