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Liam Sullivan

Mass. native strikes gold by being a huge fucking betch

- by Jed Gottlieb
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Everyone knows that the internet can make you famous in about 15 seconds, but getting *rich* from internet fame is something else entirely. Just ask Liam Sullivan. He's enthralled America with a music video starring an annoying, shoe-obsessed brat named Kelly. It has made him famous. But he's still poor.

"At first, the Kelly character wasn't working at all," says the Wrentham native, who now lives in L.A. "I was doing her in my live comedy show, and she just wasn't that funny. Then the song 'Shoes' popped into my head. It was like a techno song that just went, 'Shoes, shoes, shoes!'"

"Shoes" wasn't Sullivan's first internet short—he started out with a video titled "Hard-Hitting Questions," where a Charlie Rose type interviews a befuddled dog—but "Shoes" has been the first to take off. How big is it? Well, after being posted on his website (liamshow.com) and then quickly reposted on YouTube, the video has already been streamed some 300,000 times. With no press or publicity—just one dude emailing another dude to tell him, "You gotta check this out"—"Shoes" has spread like, well, that last video all your underemployed friends insisted you see, lest you become culturally illiterate.

Admittedly, "Shoes" is pretty awesome. Sullivan is dressed as Kelly—a valley girl who looks a lot like Garth from *Wayne's World*, only slathered in lipstick. After an argument with her parents—during which her dad (also played by Sullivan) grouses, "What are you going to do with your life?"—Kelly flips out, takes off and proceeds to tear through several mall shoe stores, exclaiming in a bizarre valley-girl voice, "These shoes rule, these shoes suck, these shoes rule, these shoes suck!" over and over again, pausing to slap boys who tell her she has too many shoes, party, and say, "Oh, and by the way *betch* ... FUCK YOU!"



“There are maybe 15 different remakes,” Sullivan says of “Shoes.” “Some are kids, some are adults. Some look professional, some are really basic. MySpace and YouTube are the two sites that have really propelled this for me. If it wasn’t for those two sites, I wouldn’t be talking on the phone with you right now. I’d just be hanging out in my dingy apartment.”

“Shoes” hasn’t made Sullivan any money—which is why he’s still living in a dingy apartment—but it has opened some doors. He’s been a working actor for years; he started at Boston’s Huntington Theatre and has since appeared on *Alias*, *8 Simple Rules* and *Gilmore Girls*. Now, with the exposure he’s gotten from “Shoes,” he has a management company, a CD and DVD, Kelly merchandise (available on myspace.com/kellylikesshoes) and has even become buddies with Margaret Cho.

“Margaret’s husband actually owns a robot costume,” explains Sullivan. “I saw a flyer with the robot on it and thought that I really needed to have the robot in my ‘Shoes’ video. I asked him if I could rent the costume, and when I returned it, I found out his wife was Margaret.”

Now Cho is collaborating with Sullivan on the next Kelly video.

“It was a universe-aligning type of thing,” says Sullivan. “Now I’ve done six shows with her where I’ve performed as the Kelly character.”

Sullivan admits he’s a little worried that Kelly may become his whole career, so he’s working on lots of new videos, and his latest, “Muffins,” is already getting good buzz. It’s a strangely addictive and painfully funny mock ad for a Massachusetts muffin company that starts weird and deteriorates into utter lunacy. In fact, it’s been captivating the entire *Dig* office for several weeks.

Even if Kelly does get old and future videos tank, Sullivan’s star is still rising. Later this year, he’ll star in VH1’s *After Work Special*, which he describes as cross between *The Office* and any number of standard ’80s after-school specials.

“We’re all depressed about being 30,” he says, “but we learn a lot of valuable life lessons.” Until the VH1 thing is up and running, he has a few more shorts—they’re surprises, so don’t even ask—that he hopes will captivate bored office drones and college kids for an afternoon.

CHECK OUT LIAM SULLIVAN’S WORK AT:

LIAMSHOW.COM

MYSAPCE.COM/KELLYLIKESSHOES