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Producer Mike Fleiss' Projects: Then and Now

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From writer to rocker, Mike Fleiss is a true Renaissance man who's done a bit of everything. While he spent his boyhood days devouring as much television as possible, he **started his career** with a reporter's notebook in hand. That's right, the Hollywood producer initially had a ball as a sports writer, starting in college at *The Daily Californian*, the student newspaper at the University of California, Berkeley.

"My life goal for the longest time, my dream, dream of unattainable dreams, the impossible dream, was to write for Portland's *The Oregonian* and cover the Trailblazers [basketball team]," he reveals. "That was my goal. That's all I ever wanted, and I never got there. I worked [in California] for papers in Sacramento and Oakland and Santa Rosa, but I never got to *The Oregonian*."

When Fleiss sensed the writing on the wall of a newspaper industry in decline, he left the sector for the more promising glow of television production. The move turned out to be a life-changing one.

Mike Fleiss' many hours spent in front of the TV taking in episodes of *Family, The Six Million Dollar Man,* and Aaron Spelling's empire of legendary shows would soon pay off.

After scoring a job on *Totally Hidden Video*, the ambitious content creator met Stephen Chao, then the president of Fox Television. Immediately impressed with Fleiss' seemingly infinite arsenal of show ideas, Chao gave him the green light to make his own show, *Before They Were Stars*. The program spotlighted commercial clips featuring celebrities before they were bona fide headliners.

Fleiss went on to produce a variety of popular reality-based projects. He showed a willingness to experiment, pushing the boundaries of the genre with shows like *High School Reunion* and *Who Wants to Marry a Multi-Millionaire?*

And he has had a fascinating film career too, starting with his production of 2003's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, a remake of the 1974 classic. He successfully remade *The Poseidon Adventure* in 2006 with *Poseidon,* and went on to make the 3D thriller *Shark Night* in 2011.

The adventurous producer then took a deep dive into documentaries with 2011's *God Bless Ozzy Osbourne* and 2014's *The Other One: The Long, Strange Trip of Bob Weir*.

In keeping with his love for rock 'n' roll, Fleiss, who famously jammed with Eddie Van Halen and became buddies with The Grateful Dead's Bob Weir, is heading out on the road with his pal Pat Mayer to perform in a Grateful Dead-Neil Young tribute band called Grateful Young.

“That’s going to be fun,” says **Mike Fleiss**, who not only has a lifelong appreciation for the Grateful Dead’s music, but also has a room in his home dedicated to memorabilia from the iconic jam band.

Fleiss explains that he and Mayer will be splitting lead and rhythm guitar duties.

“We’re just going to play Grateful Dead and Young covers,” Fleiss shares. “I played in bands with [Mayer] since the ’80s. We’re going to go on a little tour in the spring from Santa Barbara [California] up to Portland.”

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