

Interview With Marty Feldman

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By Richard Kleiner



Penthouse: How would you describe yourself?

Feldman: I look like a younger Miles Davis. I'm six feet eight inches, in fact, and black, and I play trumpet beautifully whilst playing soccer. I'm hugely muscled and wonderfully and fearfully made. I can't describe myself!

Penthouse: Are you the worst trumpet player in the world?

Feldman: Yes. But I've actually increased my range – I'm now the worst flugelhorn player in the world as well. And within the last year I have become the worst drummer in the world. Really, I've started to learn drums.

Penthouse: If you're that bad, you belong in a punk-rock band.

Feldman: No...well, it depends on what you think of punk rock. There's a lot of it I like – the part that's deliberately crude. My music is not deliberately crude – it's inept, and that's something else. It just has the ineptitude of a middle-aged Jew trying to be Billy Cobham or Miles Davis.

I can keep time on drums; I'm very good at that. I cannot really, truly understand the function of the drums when I'm sitting behind them, because you've got all your pots and pans there and you seem so remote from everybody else. You're like a goalkeeper in a hockey game or something. Suddenly the action's there, and then it's gone again – the last line of defense. I can never remember to get out of the way of the other instruments. I especially offend the bass player – my bass drum is getting in his way all the time. I play bop drums. I grew up in a bop era, and I'm dropping bombs in my bass drum, which is a bit of a pain in the ass when you're playing a steady backbeat, you know?

Penthouse: Isn't being an entertainer an odd way of making a living?

Feldman: I don't know if being an *actor* is so odd. People need storytellers. That doesn't seem to me to be terribly odd. But to be a comic, to be a clown, to invite an audience to ridicule you, does seem to be a rather strange thing for an adult to do, yes. I'm not really an adult, of course; otherwise we wouldn't be talking this way. When I grow up, I shall stop being a comic and start doing something responsible.

Penthouse: Are you a stand-up comic?

Feldman: I tried that once, when I was 15. But you know the stand-up comic is a lonely figure who is put in the position of dominating the audience. The same impulse that makes you a stand-up comic probably makes you a dictator. It's a very lonely way to make a living. I've written for a lot of stand-up comics in the past, and they are totally self-occupied and self-centered. They rarely make good actors, because they're not used to talking to anybody else – only to an audience. They remain superior to the audience; they remove themselves from being ridiculous. A stand-up comic is not ridiculous unless he becomes his own butt, like Buddy Hackett does. They ridicule other people.

Penthouse: Woody Allen isn't the kind of stand-up comic you describe.

Feldman: Woody Allen is not a stand-up comic; he's a lie-down-on-the-couch comic. His stand-up act becomes an extension, I suppose, of what he tells his analyst. But again, he's dominating the audience when he stands up there. I don't want to dominate; I prefer collaboration.

Penthouse: How do you do that?

Feldman: You're together with the rest of your group, and you all take your clothes off and stand naked with the lights on. Show all the warts and everything. The gut. Varicose veins. You have to show all that to each other before you can really work together. You say, "Look, these are all the bad things, the bad ideas. Maybe you can improve on them. Here are my failings. I'm not afraid to show them to you." Writers and actors both have to be able to do that. I must say Americans find it easier than the English do, because the English process is very much a matter of acting at arm's length. They don't touch. American actors touch. I have to touch people to know that they're there, I think.

You know, this collaboration idea is true of any relationship in life. It's true for a shortstop – knowing that second base will be covered: he just turns and spins and throws the ball to second, and second base will throw it to first base, knowing the man is going to be up, going to be keeping his foot on the base. It's faith in each other, knowing that nobody is going to drop the ball. And yet it happens. With Billy Russell it happens all the time. And yet the Dodgers pull off double play after double play, because they have a kind of trust in each other as professionals, because they play together all the time. Like jazz musicians. You've got to play together a long while to be good.

Penthouse: Back to music again?

Feldman: It all comes back to music. That's my prime source of information. Rhythm is the prime source of everything – the sound of my heart beating, a pulse, the drum. Originally somebody thumped away on some hard surface before they ever blew through anything or pulled on a string. It's the most accessible thing to do. Primitive societies – that's the kind of society I want to live in, where everybody is an actor and a writer and a grocer and everything else. They're good collaborators.

But I live in Beverly Hills, which is just the opposite. You see the rich scrambling for rich people's toys. Around Christmas it's obscene. People scrambling past each other to spend thousands of dollars and throwing charity balls for cripples. I would like to take someone with muscular dystrophy along to a charity ball for muscular dystrophy and say: "Look, he doesn't want your money. He just wants to come in and dance, okay? He's wearing a tuxedo. Let him in." Everybody would sit and feel so fucking uncomfortable. They'll raise a thousand dollars – that's easy. But they don't want to see the reality. "Don't show me a leper," they say. "I'll send him money. Don't show me a starving child. Yeah, I'll do telethons. I'll do anything just don't show me the child." That's Beverly Hills.

Penthouse: What was it like growing up in London's East End?

Feldman: It's comparable to the East Bronx in New York or New York's Lower East Side of 35 years ago. The Jews who got on a boat and left Russia or Poland ended up either in the East End of London or in New York. It was a matter of which boat got out first.

Penthouse: Were you a clown as a kid?

Feldman: Oh, yeah. Sure. You'll find that most comics are small and physically strange-looking. If you're small and funny-looking and you don't have great scholastic genius – which I certainly didn't have – you retreat to the position of comic. It's the only possible position you can take and survive among your peers. Unless you're great at sports. At sports I was like I am at drums – enthusiastic but not talented.

Penthouse: Were you popular as the class clown?

Feldman: There's a lot of anarchy in my comedy. And that goes back to being the only Jew in my class, being the alien. That's how I was treated. I should have been issued a green card then. When they had prayers, I was sent outside. I wasn't allowed to be there for prayers. They gave me extra math. That's obviously how they thought of their religion – it was as complicated and as dull as math. That's the English attitude towards Protestantism: cold showers and mathematics. It's totally sexless. Cold.

The British produced a great number of mass murderers, you know? England and Germany. Passionless mass murderers. Little bank clerks. My neighborhood doctor. They all have sort of bald, bony heads and wear pebbled-ash lenses and raincoats. You find out that nice little guy in fact slaughtered a hundred people and ate them or something. I think it has a lot to do with Protestant repression.

Penthouse: Were you a devout Jew?

Feldman: I got bar mitzvahed, the whole thing. I was very good. I learned Hebrew. I was very attracted to Judaism, to the ritualism, the theater of Judaism. Like Catholics. They do it even better – it's grand opera. The same country that produced Verdi produced Roman Catholicism. The costumes and the lighting are the same. I suppose some of my early feelings towards theater were conditioned by going to synagogue and by the Hasidim who lived in the neighborhood. They were always singing and playing the violins. They were like Sufis to me. I'm still attracted to Hasidim. I love them, although I'm no longer a Jew in any religious sense, and there is no other sense in which you can be one.

It's a love of magic that Jews have. Also, a natural sense of money! Jews are storytellers, too. I can't think of WASP storytellers that would go from village to village, telling the legends of the people, like the Jewish storytellers in the shtetls.

Penthouse: Did you write when you were young?

Feldman: I used to write a lot of poetry. I was first punished for writing at the age of 11. My school accused me of copying a poem I wrote. It wasn't very good, but it scanned and rhymed, and it might have come out of a book of children's verse or something. They said I wouldn't be punished if I admitted I copied it. I said, "But I *did* write it," and so I got punished for writing. That may have gotten me on to it. The masochist in me may have said, "Hey! People *punish* you for writing – I'll be a writer!"

So I started writing then. Writing came easy for me. I'd be asked to write an essay on what I did on my half-day's vacation. Well, I didn't do anything interesting. So I just filled the whole exercise book with a story that I'd made up – a child's novel, set during the war, in which I parachuted into occupied France and captured a German general and brought him back. I filled the whole fucking exercise book with this. Again I was punished. They said, "That isn't what you did." And I said, "No, but what I did was boring."

Needless to say, I dropped out of school early. You were supposed to make some halfhearted attempt at a higher education so that you would have some kind of career. Certainly that's what my parents wanted for me. But neither I nor any of the schools I went to thought it would be a good idea if I remained in them. We had that in common. And there were too many things I wanted to do. I wanted to write. I wanted to paint. I went to Paris to write and paint. I thought that if I went there and hung out, the ghosts of Fitzgerald and Hemingway and Henry Miller would sort of rub off on me by osmosis. But it doesn't happen by osmosis; nothing happens by osmosis. I discovered that in a year or so, during which I learned to get rid of the adjectives in my writing. I realized that the verbs or the nouns were important – either the trumpet or the rhythm section.

Penthouse: How did you make a living in Paris?

Feldman: I went there when I was 15. I did several things simultaneously. I had a jazz group, a bop group: Marty Feldman and the Bee-Bop Seven. I worked various fringe operations – legal, semi legal, some illegal activities. The usual street hustles, which could never quite get me hanged but could get me sent to reform school if I was caught. I was never caught. I worked in a carnival act for a while. I was an office boy in advertising for a little while. I worked in a musical instrument shop and in a boot factory. I finally realized I wasn't going to make it as a musician.

I started thinking about writing again. I stole books for a living for a while. There was a guy who dealt in stolen books. He would pay us a third of the published price if we'd steal them. So we would go and steal books from bookstores in London. And I found I was keeping a lot of them – I wanted to read them. I actually stole my education. I don't know why, but I got very high on American humorists very early: Thurber, Perelman, Ring Lardner. I missed the whole English mainstream. I haven't read any Thackeray. God knows what Jane Austen did, apart from writing movies for Laurence Olivier – I don't know. And yet I know all about Mark Twain, I know about Frank Sullivan, and I can tell

you all about Will Guthrie.

Penthouse: When did you have time to read?

Feldman: When my band was performing one-night stands, there wasn't very much else to do. So books were passed around. I was a magpie with anything to read. I'd swoop down on anything that seemed to glisten, take it back to my nest, and read it. And then a book would refer to another, and I'd get that, and so on and so on. But then I realized I wanted to write fiction, not read it. It wasn't necessary to read it; I wanted to improve on that. With fiction you can make the right people win – the goodies can win, you know? Nixon can be impeached – he's not pardoned in the world of fiction.

Penthouse: So, did you write fiction?

Feldman: I wrote jokes. We used to line up outside the Palladium, where a comic would be playing. His manager would come to the door, and a lot of us would stand there, holding out pieces of paper with jokes scrawled on them. And he paid a few dollars for each one he bought. When I found that somebody would pay me to write jokes, I wrote jokes for anybody who would buy them. By the age of about twenty-one, I'd become a successful writer of television situation comedies – again, without realizing what I was doing. It was just fun to do. And one thing led to another. I wrote for David Frost's show and worked with John Cleese and Graham Chapman, the future Monty Python people.

Penthouse: Did you have any idea of how successful Monty Python would be?

Feldman: I didn't have a sense of it as a movement or anything. I'm always on the fringes of movements; I never see them. I think I'm always looking the wrong way. There's a photo of the assassination of the archduke of Serbia, which started the First World War. Everybody in the photo is looking towards the murder except this one guy in the corner of the picture, who's looking somewhere else. That's me. There's always somebody looking the other way. While they were crucifying Christ, there was a guy walking down the street, stoned, on his way somewhere, who looked up the hill and saw them banging away, hitting some nails into a guy's hands. He just looked away. He didn't know he was witnessing history. That would have been me, always looking the other way.

Penthouse: Did any of your projects fail?

Feldman: My first job directing a film, *The Last Remake of Beau Geste*. I just hated the film.

Penthouse: How did you happen to do it?

Feldman: It wasn't my project. It was offered to me.

Penthouse: You didn't write it?

Feldman: I wrote it, yes. I can't not take responsibility for it. I take responsibility but not the blame. I did it because it was offered to me and I wanted to make a movie. I wanted to direct – I think all writers do. I was out of work. They wanted a Mel Brooks kind of spoof, and I wrote it to order. And I wasn't very comfortable doing that.

Penthouse: What's the difference between responsibility and blame?

Feldman: There's a difference between the two that has to do with loyalty and culpability and guilt. I may be guilty, but I'm not culpable. Maybe I was insane or acting under stress, or I did it at the point of a

rolled-up checkbook...I was raped – I don't know. But I knew what I was doing at the scene of the crime.

Penthouse: How do you prevent that from happening again?

Feldman: I get more control. I have the cutting rights to *In God We Trust*. Actually, it's the audience that does the final cut in comedies. You show it to a few audiences, and if none of them laugh at a part and you don't cut it out, you're a bloody fool, you know? The cliché that the audience is a failure but the show a success does not apply in comedy. If I make you laugh, it's comedy. If you don't laugh, I've failed. Smiles don't count – you can't hear them.

Penthouse: How do film executives treat you?

Feldman: I think they treat most comics as clowns rather than as writers-producers-moviemakers. They treat us rather like autistic children. They know there's nothing actually wrong with us and that autistic children may make them a lot of money. They know we can be a highly profitable commodity. So, they love us alone, mostly, but they don't understand the process of making people laugh.

Penthouse: Do you?

Feldman: No, that's the point. But you can't say that to someone who is going to hire you to make a comedy. You have to say, "Of course, I know why people laugh!" You have to say that to your audience, too. You can't admit insecurity about what you think is funny. You can't offer a tentative joke or routine. You have to believe you're funny.

Penthouse: With the idea that maybe it will be contagious?

Feldman: Yes! Humor is all a cumulative thing. In a Bill Cosby routine, for example, none of the parts stand out as being funny. But he manages to create an atmosphere in which one wants to laugh. It's a nice, relaxed level of humor.

Penthouse: Have you spent much time studying different theories of humor?

Feldman: When I first started writing humor, I decided I would read everything I could on it to find out what I was doing. And that will totally destroy you. You read all these different theories of humor, and they all contradict each other. It will totally destroy you. It's like if you read *Kama Sutra* before you fuck: it will totally destroy you; you won't get a hard-on. It's all theory. No good. Books and theories about humor have rarely been written by people who practice it. Freud had theories of humor. Whether one questions those theories or not, I do question the standard of the jokes he quotes – they're pretty bad. Yes, they'll all work, but so will their opposites. None of them will define humor. A sense of humor is like a sense of rhythm. If you could define it, it would no longer be a sense. If it were not a sense, you could bottle it and buy it; MCA would own it; you could make a conglomerate out of it. But you can't pin a sense down like that. It has something to do with a pulse, a heartbeat, with what makes you alive.

Something has to be dead before you can define it. That's why I hate the dictionary – it's a book full of dead words, cemetery words. Or, if you believe that things can be analyzed and defined, then the dictionary is the greatest work of literature, because all the words are there. Just pick them out and put them in the right order. That's like looking at the piano keyboard and saying, "There are eighty-eight notes there. All you have to do is put them in the right sequence and you can be Thelonious Monk." Well, fuck, that's not exactly what you'd call art.

All of the theories about humor are true to an extent, but then there's a greater truth than that, and I don't know what it is. There's a kind of Zen of humor, and if somebody is going to write it, then they'll

have to write it from the Zen point of view. Except that Zen is noticeably humor-less – it really is.

Penthouse: Is directing films an art?

Feldman: Well, I've learned that it isn't as difficult as I thought it would be. There is a great mystique about directing. Most directors, like most writers, like most actors; like most plumbers, are competent at their jobs, but they're not geniuses. There are very few really great directors. Most of them create a mystique around themselves like, like doctors do. It isn't that difficult to do that. If you're like Bunuel, you don't choose to be a genius – you are one. You can't work at being a genius. You've got it or you haven't. I've learned to have the confidence in placing the camera, and I know what lens to put on. I've realized that there is no great art or secret to that. There isn't any secret in directing a film for me. There is for Robert Altman, but I suspect the secret is just that you and I can't do it and he can.

Directing a movie is like directing traffic. You're surrounded by experts. What director knows as much about the camera as the cameraman? Directors are mostly ex-writers or ex-producers, or they've been first assistants. They have a general knowledge of it all. But they don't have specific technical knowledge of any one department. Maybe writers are the best people to become directors. Or maybe actors – they're probably the best.

Penthouse: What kind of director are you?

Feldman: I'm the guy with the whistle. Anybody can make suggestions, and I'm glad they do. Some of the best things in my latest picture were suggested by the prop master. I think the thing a director can do is create an atmosphere in which creativity is encouraged. Just because a guy is key grip doesn't mean he won't have a very good idea for a line, or a guy who is lighting a scene. Everybody makes suggestions. Then the director makes the final decisions as to which way to go. He carries the whole picture in his head, or should be able to.

Penthouse: What is *In God We Tru\$*t about?

Feldman: Well, you might say it's about the fact that Christ could no longer drive the moneylenders out of the temple, because now they *own* it, and he'd have to *pay* to get in – that's what this film is really about. So it's about the loss of innocence, the idea that one may have to be a little corrupt in order to survive. There's a great line in it: "The meek will inherit the earth, but not until the strong are finished with it, by which time it won't be worth having." That represents my own belief.

Penthouse: Do you read your reviews?

Feldman: When reviews are shown to me – and people generally only show you the bad ones – I'm devastated. Always. Totally devastated by anybody who thinks I've done anything badly. It's a sort of public insult or humiliation to which you can't reply. When you see yourself lambasted across the pages of a large newspaper as a fool, as an incompetent, or just as unfunny, you're humiliated, because you know thousands of others have read that and are saying, as you walk by: "There he is, inept and unfunny."

Penthouse: Are comedians always depressed off-stage?

Feldman: There's a tragic person inside all people. Comedy heightens your self-awareness and causes you to go out and parade your neuroses. Look at Woody Allen. He has such a need to explain himself. You wouldn't think people would want to hear it. But he does it. That takes courage. But then, it's courage if you succeed and arrogance if you fail. Woody comes out of a background that could only be Jewish New York – this need to forever *explain* himself. It's marvelous in him, because he is touched

with magic. In lesser people it just comes out as kvetching. Lenny Bruce's comedy had a very real source. All his imitators get up and just open their mouths and think it will all come out, not realizing the dues that Lenny Bruce paid as a burlesque comic. He understood how to play on an audience, like a bullfighter with a bull, like a conductor with an orchestra.

Penthouse: Do *you* have a tragic sense?

Feldman: I have this feeling that the human condition is not a particularly jocular condition. But I don't think it's a great tragedy, either. I find it rather amusing – absurd. I think looking the way I look helps me to have a sense of the absurd. The whole object of comedy is to improve things a little, not by being moralistic, but by making people laugh, perhaps stimulating a few questions – that's all.

Penthouse: It doesn't sound like you're obsessed with having to make people laugh.

Feldman: But I *am* obsessed. In my case obsession is the norm. Writing, for me, is a pathological condition. I don't even think of it as a talent. I have to get things down so the little nag inside me will shut up; that's all. I'm like a nymphomaniac who is being paid to fuck, really. It's what I have to do, a compulsion. The fact that somebody is paying me to do it is a constant source of amazement to me, because I would do it for nothing.

Penthouse: Is it possible to be both an actor and a writer?

Feldman: I'm Jekyll and Hyde. Dr. Jekyll writes, and Mr. Hyde acts and has all the fun. Writing is a continuing process that gets interrupted by acting. Writing and directing at the same time is easier – the two are interrelated. But it gets very complicated. I can be in the middle of a scene with Louise Lasser, for example: I'm acting opposite her. But then I'm suddenly aware that I'm directing her. I want to make a change in the scene but don't want to stop her, because she's going well. And I can't do anything, because the camera is on me as well. That's pretty schizophrenic.

Penthouse: Have you ever been to psychiatrist?

Feldman: I've never felt the need to go to psychologists or psychiatrists. It's not so common for the English, you know? People go much more easily to psychiatrists in this country, it seems. It's been accepted as a profession for a great deal longer.

Penthouse: What do the English have against psychiatry?

Feldman: Well, they're still a little bit suspicious of anesthetics. If you're a man, you take a swig of rum and they cut your leg off. They think having something like chloroform is rather effete. The English think of hypnotists, psychiatrists, and all fringe religions as the same thing. On the other hand, maybe it's gone too far the other way in America. The mind doctors become the shamans and replace the priests. Woody Allen knows this.

Penthouse: Isn't your style of comedy opposed to Allen's?

Feldman: I feel very close in some ways to what Woody is doing in his pictures, although it's not like anything I could ever do. I think his frame of reference is the same as mine. We're both Jews, about the same age, self-educated, wanted to be stand-up comics, wanted to be comics, became writers. So I feel drawn towards Woody, although I hardly know him.

I'm also drawn towards Mel Brooks. With all the things that are wrong with Mel, he has such an energy. He's volatile. There's no container big or strong enough to put his energy in. We're totally

opposite. I'm the introvert; he's the extrovert. That's my father's generation. That's the generation that came out without any education, that hustled and pushed and said, "I want to get to the top of the line" – and got to the top of the line and pushed their way beyond it. I recognize so much of my father in him.

And I think if I had a brother, he might have been like Woody. So I feel caught between those two cultures. And at the same time I can't get rid of the umbilical chord I have to Europe or to the European tradition that came to me via the silent movies – Keaton and Langdon and Laurel and Hardy.

Penthouse: Have you styled yourself after these people?

Feldman: I've had to accept the fact that I will never be as good as those people have been. That's the hardest pill to swallow – that I'll never be in the same league as those I admire.

Penthouse: Do you rate Chaplin up there?

Feldman: No. Well, I admire Chaplin, but I never loved Chaplin. I loved Laurel and Hardy. If I could have chosen a couple of uncles, I would have liked Laurel and Hardy. If I could have willed genius, I would have been Keaton. But you can't. And you can't aspire to be that any more than the average organist can aspire to be Bach. They are so pure and so much above anything you understand. You can't aspire to it. That's the hardest thing to swallow. You say, "Well, all I have is me, and I have to do the best I can with that."

Penthouse: Do you keep a stockpile of ideas or stories for your films?

Feldman: When an idea occurs to me, I jot it down – on a napkin in a bar or on the back of a menu. When I worked at home, I would give these napkins and things to my secretary, who would type them out and file them for me. But I'm terribly disorganized. My mind is like an attic full of junk. When I'm writing, I rumble around through my head to see what's up there and I don't know where anything is. I'll stumble across something, and I'll think, "Oh, that might be interesting," and take it down into the daylight and polish it up and look at it and get some of the slop and mildew off it and say, "Oh, that's quite a good idea." Other things I'll leave up there – they're best left in the dark, you know?

That's exactly what it's like when I write. It's a sort of stumbling around in the dark, in the attic of my head, knowing that the stuff is up there because everything I've seen and done and have been told about and have experienced has been assimilated. It's there somewhere, so I just wander around. It's very aimless and rather dangerous. You can bruise your shins and get some very bad ideas.

Penthouse: Are you ever afraid that all your ideas will dry up?

Feldman: Yeah, but I fear it so often that I've gotten used to it. It's like living in the slide area in California. People who live there don't worry about it. They know it's dangerous and that their house may not be there tomorrow. It's like the house in Chaplin's *Gold Rush* – the one that's tipping backwards and forwards. I feel like I live in that house. Eventually I hope to get out, before the house goes over the cliff. But really I'm used to panicking early to avoid the rush.

Every time I write I know I'm going to go through all kinds of insecurities about it, and that I shall lose faith in it about 20 times in the process of writing one draft. And all I do then is hang on to my instincts – whatever it was that made me think it was funny in the first place.

Penthouse: Are you developing any new films now?

Feldman: I haven't had an idea for a movie in months. I'm still so involved in *In God We Tru\$*. Yesterday I suddenly had a clutch of ideas that all came to me from different directions, three of which I like very much. They started to nag at me. And the one that nags, "Write me! Write me!" the loudest and

the longest is the one that gets itself written.

Penthouse: So you don't panic when you go through periods without ideas?

Feldman: No. I know that there are thousands, millions, an indefinite number of possibilities. And they just sort of arrive. I suppose it's the same if you're a photographer with a trained eye. A photographer does not consciously go around framing compositions. But he has a trained eye for a good shot without even knowing it. Cartier-Bresson will just pick up his camera and snap, whereas I would spend hours with the viewfinder. He has a trained eye. And I suppose, in a similar way, I have a trained sense of what will work in the written form.

Penthouse: Is the idea the most important part?

Feldman: Absolutely not. Everything is in the execution. The idea is worth nothing, really. The idea is timpani. Suppose you were a producer, and I came and told you the plot of *Hamlet*, and I said, "It's a story about this prince. And his father's ghost comes to him and tells him that his uncle murdered him by pouring poison in his ear. And then the uncle married the mother, as a result of which Hamlet does nothing for two hours." Okay? Call it the tragedy of indecision or whatever. But that's a helluva bad story. You'd throw me out of your office, right? And you'd be right!

But then I'm not Shakespeare. It was a lousy plot, but the story doesn't matter at all; the idea doesn't matter. *King Lear* is an awful idea; it's a situation comedy idea, isn't it? Norman Lear could have done that. It's all in the execution.

Penthouse: What are your ambitions now?

Feldman: I've never thought beyond the present. I've never thought in terms of either routes or destinations. The only time you concern yourself with a destination is when you have arrived, retired, and stopped doing things. Then you say, "Where I am was my destination," and you look back and say, "That was an interesting route I came by." Thinking about destinations gets in the way. I may come to a fork in the road, and if I'm worried about destinations, I may miss that pretty road down there because I'm on the freeway.

But I pretty much enjoy doing what I'm compelled to do by whatever inner demons I have. I present it to an audience in the hope that they will like it, too. That's all I can do. As long as they like it, I'm in business. If they don't, then I have to get out of it and do something else for a living. So far, I'm doing well enough to be allowed to continue doing what I want to do.
