

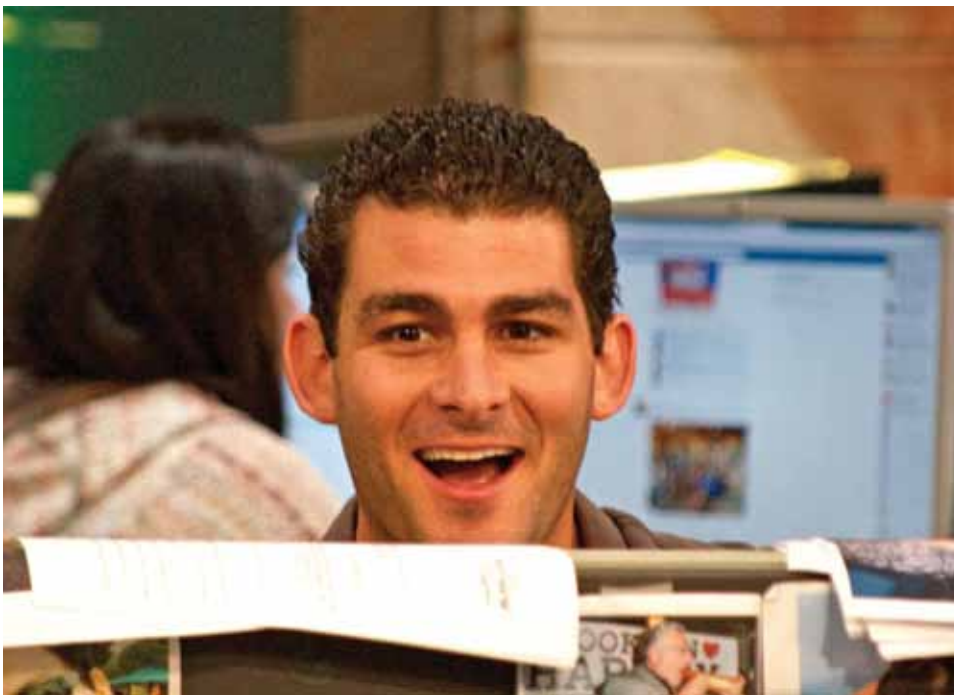
TMZ Executive Producer, Evan Rosenblum

## Interview with a Celebrity Interviewer

TMZ, a relative newcomer, began in 2005 as the brainchild of Harvey Levin... you know, the "I'm a Lawyer" guy. TMZ made its way onto TV in 2007. For those who may have forgotten, "TMZ" is short for "The Thirty Mile Zone"; or Hollywood Producer short-speak for the 30-mile radius within which most Hollywood movie production occurs and the distance after which extra crew fees and travel expenses kick-in. While it's described as a Celebrity Gossip, Entertainment and Celebrity News organization, I wouldn't relegate TMZ to merely gossip news coverage. Almost immediately after launching, TMZ began earning its bones as journalists. TMZ is credited with breaking such global news as the Michael Jackson investigations and most tragically broke the news of Michael Jackson's demise; as well as, the many

times difficult-to-watch Donald Sterling-Clippers debacle. TMZ created its own sometimes tongue-in-cheek, good-humored, unique Entertainment News coverage style and format; at which many would agree they remain the best.

Recently, I was able to speak with Evan Rosenblum, an Executive Producer at TMZ and TMZ Hollywood Sports where he also performs double-duty as its lead host. Evan has been with Harvey Levin from the beginning. He started as an intern while still pursuing his undergraduate degree in Journalism from Arizona State University. In a very short period, Evan has come a long way. During our conversation, I learned that Evan is credited with breaking some of TMZ's biggest stories.



I thought my interview went extremely well exclusively due to Evan, until I played back the recording while writing this article. My staff overheard the recording. Make no mistake, Evan was articulate, engaging and a real pleasure. The problem, according to my mostly female staff, is that Evan – and I'm certainly not a very good judge of such things – is a rather attractive man. I failed to invite him into our office where members of my staff may have had the opportunity to meet him during the interview – and, according to my staff – ensure the most accurate presentation of Mr. Rosenblum's enviable career.

**FB: What was your first journalism job after you graduated?**

ER: "Harvey Levin hired me right out of college to be a production assistant on a show called *Celebrity Justice*. That show focused on the legal issues involving high profile people, celebrities, everything from the Michael Jackson molestation case to Robert Blake, to Kobe Bryant. So, it was very cool to be a part of the operation. I interviewed people in the Scott Wyler drug case. It was a very cool on the job kind of experience very early in my career. I remember actually my first assignment, when I was a production assistant at *Celebrity Justice*, was a story involving Larry Flynt, and they sent me over to Larry Flynt's office to interview him about an issue. And I remember thinking, "I can't believe I'm about to go walk into Larry Flynt's office." It was a pretty cool experience for a 22 year old kid."

**FB: What is your daily schedule like? Do you have a mantra that helps you through your day?**

ER: "We go at about a hundred miles an hour from the second we walk in until the second we leave. It's 'hit the ground running' when we walk in. First, we have a news meeting for the television show and we shoot that. And then, we go back to writing more stories for the website. Then, we preview the television show, and then we go back to writing more stories for the website. And then, we do another television show and the war stories. We have TMZ on TV, TMZ Live, TMZ Hollywood Sports. In between taping and making those shows, we are constantly publishing stories on our website. It is very busy from start to finish, but it's a fun job. It's an exciting job. It's great."

**FB: How difficult is it to be the producer of live television, which you create on-the-fly as news breaks, and appearing as talent in your own series?**

ER: "It has its challenges, but overall, it is fun and exciting. It's cool because we are not playing characters. We get to work on these things from start to finish. So it's challenging, but it's rewarding."

**FB: What was the most fun? The most fun story, the most fun location, the most fun personality to cover?**

ER: "Right now, I love covering Rob Gronkowski, the tightend for the New England Patriots. He is just one of the best personalities in not just sports but in Hollywood. He is great. I enjoy covering him. Over the years, you know, there have been some great people that are a lot of fun out there. Shaquille O'Neal picked up one of our photographers one time, and kidnapped him for the day. That was a lot of fun. We've had guys like John Cena. Mark Cuban was great. He is a lot of fun. He's a really interesting guy."

**FB: What would you consider the biggest story you ever broke for TMZ or TMZ Sports?**

ER: "Wow. The death of Michael Jackson was probably the biggest story that TMZ ever broke. You know, we also broke Ray Rice, which was a big story. Going way back: exposing the cover-up in Malibu when Mel Gibson was arrested for DUI back in, I believe, 2006. Harvey Levin broke that story and it was an incredibly important story."

And following that, I was a big part of the Michael Richards's story when he went on his racist tirade at the Laugh Factory, I believe that was in 2006, as well. That was a very important story too because that was the first time you really saw a TMZ video watermark and logo on the television, it was an important piece of video for us. Moving forward, the Donald Sterling story, the owner of the Clippers, when we uncovered and posted the audio where he was making racist comments about black people and Magic Johnson. That was a very important story for us as well."

**FB: Have you ever been star-struck while you did a story?**

ER: "I get star-struck all the time! We actually got on the phone with Bo Jackson, a hero of mine growing up. So to be able to talk to Bo Jackson was an incredible thing. Hulk Hogan, I couldn't believe it. I came home and I told my wife, 'I can't believe we talked to Hulk Hogan today.' That was pretty surreal. That was one of my favorites."

**FB: Which is easier, to take the interview or give the interview?**

ER: "Oh, I'd much rather be on the interviewing side of the relationship. I like to be asking questions."

**FB: So, let's call this your chance. Is there anything you would like to ask me? We'll just call it a cleansing moment for you.**

ER: "Anything I would like to ask you? Sure. What is your favorite TMZ moment?"

**FB: That's a very good question because, honestly, I don't know that I have one. Every time I tune in, I'm just wondering who the heck is going to be on the news that day. The Clint Eastwood one, where he gave you three words. "Well, they're right."**

ER: "We asked him about American Sniper."

**FB: Right.**

ER: "About the critics." JEFF FISHMAN

