

Some People Really Do Live Their Dream

By John H. Vargo, Publisher

How do you tie dogs, boats, fun, making money and enjoying yourself on the Hudson River all in one lifetime? *Read on, here's how...*

For Annie Wasserman and Robert Hewitt whose love of dogs really has become their “way of life” dogs form the basis of their daily lives!

Annie will tell you that she has always loved dogs. As a teenager, when she mentioned to her mother that she was going to make a living raising dogs, her mother just said, OK, OK and went on with her daily routine..

Then it happened! A moment in your life that changes everything! For Annie it was thirty years ago and her first “gig”, a contract to use her Rottweiler in A New York City Park Event, ‘Shakespeare In The Park’, where her then love of her life, her Rottweiler, “Shayna” played a thirty minute part in the play, “Titus Andronicus”, the bloodiest of all the Shakespeare plays. It allowed Annie to be at the Central Park event every night it ran. Not only getting paid 300 bucks a night but enjoying all the back stage hoopla that the event engendered! That did it for Annie, she was “hooked for Life” on this life style.

On top of the notoriety this particular dog became famous in the Rottweiler world for her acting and was pictured in Rottweiler books and on the cover of the Atlas Of Dog Breeds Of The World.

While her first interest in dogs was training, Rottweilers and Golden Retrievers Annie also

focused on marketing her dogs through agencies that specialized in hiring dogs for events, magazines, and any other reason that someone might hire her and her dogs for.



The pugs worked the 2018 Grammy Awards where they were handed out as consolation gifts as a joke to some very famous comedians including Jerry Seinfeld.

Training Shiksa to stay



At one point in her life, she began breeding and training Labrador Retrievers and Pugs. The pugs have become a favorite on shows such as Saturday Night Live.

I was very interested in understanding how Annie trained her dogs and she replied:

“Training a dog to do something over and over again is easy once you have the dog doing a command on cue verbally or with a hand signal you practice, practice, and more practice with a lot of distractions not just in your home but outside at a dog park in a grocery store parking lot, ETC! I teach them a new trick or action then go to my bank lobby and Tractor Supply where there is a lot of dog and people traffic. If they listen then you have it made. To get them to like what they are doing with everything else in life you have to make it enjoyable! Enjoyable for a dog is lots of treats and praise as a reward! This way they want to do it! Here is Shiksa practicing in Tractor Supply a few days before going on Saturday Night Live, where since she is live on camera there is no room for error! I made her sit and stay on a cart dolly on top of a box with a little fireman hat on for about 6 minutes to Mimic what she could expect on SNL. I ended up sitting under the front camera 20ft away and since it's live I could only give the sit and stay command by hand signal She was so good that Martin Short, and Alec Baldwin came looking for her backstage to meet her! LOL”

Annie Wasserman: So here is just a small sample of how the dogs earn their keep and more!

LOL they are on many Avanti greeting cards and Merchandise. They do print ads and commercials.

They did a parody for a few years for Nickelodeon Jr. Called the Loud House Pug House. They are on Saturday Night Live for NBC a lot, in fact our white pug Shiksa has been on 13 times including 5 very famous skits, 2 with Scarlett Johansson as the “Trump Dog.” Seth Rogen and Kevin Hart.

They also did a skit in SNL called Pug Wigs were they used 8 of Meshuga Dogs pugs. Simcha who was in the Tina Turner wig now has her own GIFs on the Internet as do many of our other pugs! The pugs were also hired for the 2018 Grammy awards were they handed puppies out as consolation gifts as a joke but the pups went to some very famous comedians including Jerry Seinfeld, Sarah Silverman and Jim Gaffigan. Seinfeld received Chutzpah and wanted to buy her after the Grammys but I was already too attached to sell her. The dogs also have a big presence on social media. One video of Chutzpah jetskiing on the Hudson by herself had so many hits that Viral Hog bought the rights to it. Bar Stool Sports has also had them on where they gathered 2 million likes in a few hours!!

Then there is the part of Annie's life that makes all the other work a pleasure, taking the dogs out on the Hudson River, either on their boat or on their heavy duty Kawasaki Jet Ski's.

Being big time boating and jet skiing enthusiasts whenever Bobby and I had a free moment we used to head to the Hudson River. Problem was we had to leave the dogs behind who love doing things with us. So we thought of the idea of buying a bigger boat and bigger jet skis! Thus the Pug-boat was born!



Meshugadogs: Tchotchke, Newman, Simcha, Chutzpah & Shiksa

We have a slip and keep our 30 ft Sea Ray Sundancer at USA Marina where we just love the owner Eli Herskowitz and Nick Verastegui the manager and his staff. Every one there seems to love the dogs and should we ever show up without them, which is seldom, we get many questions as to their whereabouts!

We usually alternate between taking the dogs out with us on the ski's or take the boat, which is usually determined by the weather and how many pugs we want to take with us. We have mastered a way to now take 4 of them to a ski with the boat of course we can take a lot more!!! The Pug Boat was named after the pugs because frankly and honestly they paid for it!

The pugs love going on the Ski's as a matter of fact when they see us preparing to go to the marina they start barking and carrying on at the house. The pugs wear wet suits, life vests, and goggles to protect them while riding. Over the years we have perfected ways to harness them safely on the ski. They are never restrained or tied so if the ski should capsize they can swim freely.

As a dog lover myself, having had Springers, and Labrador Retrievers, while my dogs were very well trained, at times they can be unpredictable.

So I asked Annie, "did you ever have an event go bad because the dog or chicken did not do what the director asked?"



"Well John", To be honest I have never had a job where the animal I brought didn't perform. I recently had to do a commercial with a chicken for GE for their light sensors. It was shot at the Douglass House in Orangeburg, NY. The chicken they said just had to walk through a doorway from inside the house to outside. However when the director took me through a walk through the chicken had to walk about in the farmhouse kitchen past a light sensor etc. plus the director informed me they were running late which I know in the film industry they hate! I had practiced using chop meat which chickens love to eat as a treat! The chicken I brought with me works a lot. Anyway it was unbelievable how quick and good the chicken did her job and she even stopped to peck at the sensor!!! After the chicken was done the director announced on the loud speaker that it took a chicken to get them back on time!! In another instance I did a movie at a beautiful house on a lake in Stamford CT with a pug named Magic, the movie is called The Big Wedding. In the movie Susan Sarandon was a big time Pug enthusiast who owned 2 pugs. I had to go very often for about 2 weeks. One day while I was there they were filming the opening scene which was 2 beautiful swans swimming in the lake and they wanted them to make a heart shape using their heads and neck. The Agency I was working for that day had ingeniously come up with a harness to put on them and cables to hold onto them so



they didn't take off and so they could catch them once done. The agency never did this before and realized they needed someone on the dock to hold one swan and someone in the water to control the other. It was a wide shot so a boat couldn't be used or it would be in the shot. Problem was the lake was very deep and the agency couldn't get anyone to jump in the water to do it. For me living on Skyline Lake in Ringwood, NJ, since I was born and swimming in the Hudson every chance I get this was a piece of cake! Treading water is something I can do for days! I had to swim out to the middle of the lake hold onto the swan with the cable and when I got the signal I had to go under water so I was not in the shot. It worked out great! The director and producer of the movie got everything they wanted.



The Pugs all ready in their safety equipment.

The agency I work for was thrilled they told me they had passed up thousands of dollars because they could never get that accomplished before. Annie went on to say, In the early 2000's I had a pug named Ughy she was just adorable, she was well trained and very laid back. One of the agents I work for is very weight conscious with the dogs. When submitting pictures for a job, she would always ask if the dog still looks the same way or if it got heavy.

This particular job was for the first Red Roof Inn in Manhattan, they had just opened a gym upstairs, and wanted to do an ad showing the gym with a heavy lady sitting next to a treadmill where she was holding her pug's leash while the pug was on the treadmill. When I got to the gym there was my agent and another woman there with a lanky skinny looking pug and a very exasperated photographer! After eyeing up the situation for a bit the photographer asked the other lady to take a break with her pug for a while. He then asked me to put Ughy on the treadmill for some shots. I just set Ughy's legs like they were in motion and told her to stand and stay. The photographer shot about ten rolls

of film in five minutes. When the other lady got back from her break the photographer said to the lady "you can pack up your pug and go home"! It seems the other pug wouldn't stay still and was there for an hour and the photographer had only shot one roll of film. When it was over and I headed out, my agent said "well Ughy saved the day." I asked why she had the other pug there to begin with, she said "she was afraid maybe Ughy had gotten too heavy", well long story short she never did that again!

As you can see by all these experiences "some people really do live out their dreams!"



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