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## Hobby Profile: Joshua Platt (Bedminster, NJ)

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### How I Met Cosmo Kramer: Autograph Hunting At the NBC Upfront:

Working for the Internet division of a major television network has a few perks, among them the occasional opportunity to meet celebrities in the course of conducting everyday business. Such was the case for me when I attended the NBC Primetime Preview in May. Although I have worked for a major network on-and-off for more than seven years, this was a first for me and I was excited by the opportunity.

The "Upfront," as the event is known to the TV and advertising industries, is the unveiling of the new season's programs. Capturing the collective attention of a mass audience is the heart of NBC's business. Upfront producers take this mission seriously, working for months to make the presentations as entertaining, dramatic and compelling as the shows being premiered. The network trots out its biggest guns, offering a lavishly staged, invitation-only show, held this year at Lincoln Center's Metropolitan Opera House in New York City.

Following the presentations is a reception where guests mingle with the stars, a ploy by the network execs attempting to convince advertisers to buy commercial time during NBC programs rather than during those aired elsewhere. Hoping for a chance to meet a few celebrities and add to my autograph collection, I came armed with index cards. As it turned out, I was right to be prepared, although I decided the Upfront invitation made a more unique place for signing than did blank cards.

Walking down the ramp from the main reception room to an outdoor garden, I passed Oliver



**Greg Lemond  
Signed Photo**

A reader in Bedminster, NJ writes in about his "Gem," and his experience meeting one of his childhood heroes... [More...](#)

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**Joshua Platt:  
Bedminster, NJ**

This month's profile comes to us from New Jersey. Joshua tells us what it's like to work with celebrities everyday... [More...](#)



Platt, who's new show *Deadline* casts him as a crusading New York City investigative reporter. I was still wearing my nametag at this point, and it must have caught Platt's eyes, because the *Three Musketeers* and *Bulworth* star stopped dead in his tracks and began talking to me.

"Joshua Platt?" he questioned. "I'm Oliver Platt!" he said, grinning and offering me a handshake.

Star-struck and caught completely off guard, I didn't know what to say. Mustering as much composure as I could, I responded.



**Sign Here!** Joshua got this Primetime Preview signed by many of the shows stars

"I know," I told Platt somewhat-less-than-poignantly, before finally pulling myself together and wishing him luck with his new show.

Once in the garden, my dimwittedness didn't last long. After taking pictures with the casts of *Will & Grace* and former *Wings* funnyman Steven Weber's new sitcom, I decided I'd better be confident if I wanted to make the most of this exciting opportunity. That's when I spotted the president talking to an *Access Hollywood* camera crew.

OK, I admit, it wasn't President Bill Clinton. Rather, it was Martin Sheen, who plays the president on TV as the star of the White House drama *West Wing*. I'd read Martin Sheen was always courteous to fans, and I found out it is true when I stopped to talk to him. Sheen gladly conversed with me. In fact, he talked to nearly everyone -- partygoers, reporters, waiters, busboys, etc.



Something else I'd read about Sheen turned out to be true; he happily gives autographs when asked, but he always personalizes. I suppose this is Sheen's attempt to prevent his signature from later being sold. I'm a collector who prefers to share stories of rubbing elbows with the stars to selling autographs, so it didn't bother me at all when Sheen asked for my name and added "To Josh, Peace!" in signing and dating my invitation. Later Sheen and nearly the entire cast of *West Wing* posed for pictures.

Newly emboldened by my experience with Sheen, I went back inside. *Seinfeld* is on my short list of all-time favorite TV shows, and I was honored to meet Michael Richards next. After a picture, I asked Richards for his signature. Looking at Martin Sheen's autograph, Richards commented on his fellow actor's talents, adding "Fine actor!" next to Sheen's signature with a Kramer-esque flourish before autographing my invitation.

Next came the opportunity to take pictures with Oliver Platt. This encounter went much more smoothly than the first. After exchanging handshakes and posing for a photo, Platt also obliged me by signing my now growing invitation collection.

Yamine Bleeth's new show, *Titans*, combines the tawdriest elements of seemingly every Aaron Spelling serial drama ever made. Needless to say, sex sells, and the line for photos with the cast was interminable, despite the fact that *Titan's* plotlines don't represent high art. Closed out of the opportunity to be in a picture, I did manage to snag the former *Baywatch* babe's autograph as Bleeth left the stage and headed for the door.

I've heard others say many times that patience pays off when collecting autographs, and this held true for me. As the party wound down and the room began to clear, I got the chance to meet Katey Sagal. The former Harlette and *Married With Children* star plays the aunt in *Tucker*, a new sitcom about a dysfunctional extended family. The cast happily posed for a photo, and Sagal capped-off my "Upfront collection" by adding her signature to my invitation.

As the party ended, I headed for home, satisfied with my new acquisitions and all the stories this day generated. Upon reflection, I have two regrets. First, the opportunity to meet celebrities of any sort is rare, and I should not have felt awkward about asking for an autograph as a memento of the occasion. If I had to do it over again, I would have shunned my sense of humility and asked - politely - for autographs from Steven Webber and the *Will & Grace* gang. Secondly, much earlier in the day, I never would have folded the Upfront invitation in half to better fit it in my suit's breast pocket!

**About the author:**

I began collecting autographs of football players in 1986. While covering news stories as a

## The Autograph Report - Hobby Profile: Joshua Platt (Bedminster, NJ)

newspaper, radio, TV and Web journalist over the last seven years, I've had the opportunity to meet and get the signatures of numerous authors, politicians and some fellow journalists I admire. In February, I attended a baseball card show where the New York Yankees perfect game pitchers were signing autographs. The opportunity to meet Don Larsen, David Wells and David Cone and have the trio autograph a baseball rekindled my interest in collecting. I'm now working on acquiring the signatures of my favorite authors, baseball players, broadcasters, cartoonists, and television and film stars. Some of my recent by-mail successes include John Sterling and Michael Kay (WABC radio broadcasters for the New York Yankees), Walter Cronkite (former anchor for the CBS *Evening News*), Matthew Broderick (*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*), and Mike Farrell (M\*A\*S\*H).



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