Hi, my name is Ben Shelton, and I am a proud Puget Sound alumnus. I graduated from University of Puget Sound in 2003 with a B.A. in theatre arts. I acted in four staged productions in my four years, playing Benedick in Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*, King Marchan in the musical *Victor/Victoria*, and an Alzheimer’s patient named Jim McKisic in the modern play *Tales of the Lost Formicans* for my senior thesis.

When I wasn’t on the stage or behind the camera, I was a point guard on the Loggers varsity basketball team. It’s funny, but after I stopped playing, the team got really good. Just a coincidence, I’m sure. And in my spare time, I was the student body (ASUPS) president in 2002–03. I guess you could say I took advantage of my college experience. And honestly, I only wish I did more.

I also co-founded the student film club now known as Praxis Imago, though it was originally called “The Cinematic Imagination Agency” (or The CIA). I loved making movies in college and won first place in the Puget Sound short film festival known as Foolish Pleasures.

Today I'm a young filmmaker in Los Angeles, Calif. In the last two years my filmmaking partner, Eric Ankrim ’03, and I have directed a few nationally televised commercials, signed a Web-series deal with MySpace.com, were featured on the home page of YouTube, and shot in-game entertainment for the NBA’s Miami Heat. It’s been fun.

My most recent project is a short film titled "My Name is Lisa," about a 13-year-old girl dealing with her mother’s Alzheimer’s disease. This is the first time I have returned to focus on this troubling subject since my senior thesis at Puget Sound.

“*My Name is Lisa*” has been selected as one of the top 20 finalists in Fox Searchlight’s International Short Film Competition. Hosted on YouTube, the contest is called "YouTube Project: Direct" and is sponsored by Fox Searchlight and Hewlett-Packard. Check it out at [www.youtube.com/projectdirect](http://www.youtube.com/projectdirect).

The finalists are from all over the world—Italy, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, England, and Canada. In the United States, there are finalists from California, Texas, and North Carolina. The finalists were chosen by an expert panel led by filmmaker Jason Reitman, who directed the critically acclaimed *Thank You For Smoking* and the new holiday release *Juno*, about a 16-year-old girl who has an unplanned pregnancy.

The Project: Direct competition had three basic rules to make a short film:
1. A character facing a situation above his/her maturity level (as in the film *Juno*)
2. The line of dialogue: "I demand an explanation for these shenanigans! What do you have to say?"
3. The passing of a photograph (because of the Hewlett-Packard sponsorship)

The winner of the contest will be chosen by the YouTube community (voting ends Dec. 2, 2007) with the winner announced Dec. 5.

I feel blessed to have attended University of Puget Sound, and as Los Angeles chills down to 68 degrees this winter, I'll be thinking about the beautiful Northwest and when I'll be back again to visit.

*Ben's short films, videos, commercials, and music videos can be found online: [www.BENandERIC.com](http://www.BENandERIC.com) - more comedic material  
[www.SheltonFilms.com](http://www.SheltonFilms.com) - more dramatic material*